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## MONTGOMERYSHIRE SCREENS AND ROOD-LOFTS.

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ONE of the duties of an archdeacon being to inspect periodically the fabrics and the furniture of the churches and their records, I have, in the course of my visits, met with many beautiful remains of screens and rood-lofts, and with occasional notices of the removal of others. As some of them are marvels of skill in design and execution, and yet their history is little known, it will not be uninteresting to recall briefly their purpose and history, and to place on permanent record some account of those at least within the county.

*Their Origin.*—In the ordinary division of our parish churches into nave and chancel, we are reminded that the chancel derives its name from the Cancelli, lattices or balusters, that marked off the portion where the divine offices were celebrated from the body of the church where the people joined in the worship. For the first three centuries, indeed, of the Christian era, we find no record of any such partition; but if we may argue from analogy, it is most probable that something of the kind did exist. For, just as the great festivals

and the sacraments of the Christian Church were the evangelical development of those of the Jewish Church, so it is most likely that in the arrangement of the fabric, the divine pattern followed in the Tabernacle and the Temple would influence that of the Ecclesia. And we do find, as a matter of fact, that from the early part of the fourth century, that is, "after the time of Constantine, tapestry, a veil, curtain, or balustrade, like an altar-rail, was employed, like the modern Greek 'iconostasis,' as a screen to mark the division."<sup>1</sup> These screens, mentioned by St. Augustine, St. Gregory Nazianzen, Theodoret, Sozomen, Synesius, St. Germanus, St. Paulinus, St. Gregory of Tours, and the Council of Chalcedon, had three doors; one facing the altar, a second fronting the Gospel side, and a third the Epistle side. Before them veils were dropped at the consecration. In their construction more substantial and permanent materials were early employed. The screen of the Apostles at Constantinople was a lattice of gilt brass; that of Tyre, erected by Paulinus, of carved wood; and one of stone, c. 340, remains at Tepekerman. In England, the earliest form appears to have been that, not of screen work, but of curtains drawn across the narrow chancel arch of our pre-Norman (and early Norman) churches, and is alluded to in an early Anglo-Saxon Pontifical as "*Extenso velo inter eos et populum;*" and, later on, by Durandus in the thirteenth century: "*interponatur velum aut murus inter clerum et populum.*"<sup>2</sup>

The earliest *wooden* screen work known to Mr. Bloxam in this country is a loft in the Norman church of St. Nicholas, at Compton, in Surrey; and almost the only one of the thirteenth century he had met with was at Thurstaston, in Leicestershire. Specimens of screen work of the fourteenth century are more numerous, but still rare, while those of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries are frequent.

<sup>1</sup> Walcott's *Sacred Archaeology*.

<sup>2</sup> Bloxam, *Gothic Ecclesiastical Architecture*, vol. ii, p. 35.

*Form.*—They occur under several forms : earliest as simple screens ; later, but still early, as rood screens, that is, screens with a figure of our Lord on the Cross and the Virgin Mother and St. John on either side. Sometimes they have a loft above them, upon which was also a rood : and occasionally the rood was placed on a beam, more or less carved, and extending across the nave at the chancel arch.

In Wales, we have mention of roods as early as A.D. 935, when in the Dinnetian Code of the Laws of Howel Dda it was enacted that "one of the three places where a person is not to give the oath of an absolver, is at the church door ;<sup>1</sup> for the 'Pater' is there to be chanted before the rood" (*cany's canu y Pader adly [dyn] yna rac bron y groc*). Although comparatively few now remain in our churches, it is evident that they were at one time general. Small windows high up in the church wall, which lighted them, corbels on which their beams rested, the remains of the stair and the doorway by which they were approached, and occasionally fragments of the screen itself, attest their former existence.

*Use.*—It will be asked what was their use and purpose : were they simply ornamental, or had they a ritual and liturgical use ? At first they appear to have been simply a low partition to divide the nave from the choir or chancel. The next stage was the introduction of a beam above it, extending across the arch and supported by a row of columns. Then followed the gradual elaboration of these several parts. A simple cross placed over the centre gave prominence to the prime doctrine of the Atonement and its bearing on the Christian life. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which (or whom) the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Gal. vi, 14). Between the supporting pillars a little tracery was introduced. Then came

<sup>1</sup> By the church door appears to be meant here the screen door from the nave into the chancel.

the transition from the symbolic to the realistic, and the substitution of the Crucifix for the Cross. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii, 2). The awe and reverence which the sacred Figure called forth in those "before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified" (Gal. iii, 1), expressed itself in the more elaborate ornamentation of all the surroundings, and the figures of St. John and the Mother were added on either side. The prominent position thus given to the Virgin Mother and St. John must have tended greatly to promote the cultus of Hagiology, which spread so rapidly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. And when the rood screen came to be enlarged into a rood loft, the crocketed niches were filled with statuettes, and the panels sometimes painted with pictures of the saints.

The Epistles and Gospels, which were read at first from "Ambons," raised desks or pulpits, and afterwards from the screen, were now read from the rood loft, as also were certain public notices, as Letters of Communion, Bishops' Pastorals, the proclamation of Treaties and Acts of Councils. From it, too, penitents were absolved, the benediction of the bishop was pronounced, and elect abbots were presented to the people. Sometimes the lofts contained an altar; more often altars were placed under them at the west side, and were thence called "rood altars."<sup>1</sup> In later times they were used as organ lofts and singing galleries.

Being used for so many purposes, and occupying so

<sup>1</sup> "Besides the altars at Peterchurch (in Herefordshire), the only rood-loft altars I have met with yet existing in this country are two beneath the rood loft in the little church of Patricio, near Crickhowel, South Wales: one placed on each side of the entrance into the chancel, westward, and against the screen supporting the rood loft. Both of these altars are of plain masonry, with the usual thick, projecting, covering slabs and altar-stones, each marked with the five crosses, and the under part of each chamfered." (Bloxam, vol. ii, p. 140).



important a position, they were richly ornamented. The vaulting, which curved out from the traceried screen and projected on either side, was ornamented with elaborate designs; the sides of the loft were pierced with graceful open tracery; the junction of the panels was set off with delicate canopy work, and the horizontal bands were enriched with beautiful vine, oak, and other patterns; and the whole was in some cases adorned with rich colouring in vermilion, blue, and gold. The images themselves were enriched with gold and jewels. Thus Gruffydd ap Meredydd ap Dafydd says of the famous Rood of Chester:—

“Llun ei oreu mab llawn aur a main.”<sup>1</sup>

When we think of the havoc and destruction with which they were visited by the Reformers and their successors, we cannot but ask why they were so grievously maltreated, and what could have led to the determined and wholesale ruin that overtook such beautiful specimens of ecclesiastical art, such marvels of delicate design and workmanship, as made them the chiefest ornaments of our Pre-Reformation Churches. The answer must be, the abuses which sometimes accompanied them. And when it was determined to do away with the abuse, small consideration was given to distinctions and exceptions, “*De minimis non curat lex.*” The desire to instruct an ignorant and impressionable people through the eye, for everywhere “*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures, Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus,*” led to the introduction of devices and tricks, by means of which, as in miracle plays and puppet shows, a greater realism was produced, and deeper emotions excited of pity, awe, and devotion. Mr. Walcott quotes the statement that “many superstitions were connected with Roods ‘with rolling eyes and sweating brows, with speaking mouth and walking feet.’”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Myv. Arch.*, p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> *Sacred Archæology.*

The abuses laid against them, though often interested and exaggerated, were no mere invention; and their influence on the unreasoning popular mind was great. The miraculous image of the Virgin at Penrys, in Glamorganshire, is thus described by contemporary poets, and it is hard to imagine greater credulity:—

“Delw Veir nid dilavurach  
Na Mair o'r nef am roi'n iach.”

RISIART AP RYS 1480—1520.

“Mae nawnef mewn un ynys  
Mae hyn o rad ym henn Rys  
Mae dynion yma dynnir  
Mair o'th wyrth hyd mor a thir  
Yna i daethost vendith fawr  
I'r lle hwn o'r nef i'r llawr  
Dy ddew bob dydd a welynt  
Yn vyw' a gad o nef gynt.”

LEWYS MORGANWG.

“O daw llef y dall yvydd  
E wyl y dall olau dydd  
O daw angall au dynged  
E ddaw gras iddaw oi gred  
O daw byddar at arall  
E glyw llef o glwyf y llal  
Vae glaf ar vaglau owwy  
O gor Mair ny ddygir mwy  
Ych delw i iachau dolur  
Chwi a iachewch dolur a chur.”

*Ibid.*

And in the same spirit, Gruff. ap Mered. ap Dafydd, in his poem “I'r Grog o Gaer” (The Rood of Chester), already quoted, after praising “Delw fyw f' Arglwydd eurlliw,” declares:

“I ddew unmab Mair ydd addolaf  
O ddilys araith gwaith gwerthforaf.”

The Nemesis came at last, though not all at once. In 1 Edward VI (1547), by the King's injunctions, all images which had been, or were, abused with pilgrimage

<sup>1</sup> The Day of “Y Ddelw fyw” was September 9th.

or offerings of anything made thereunto were ordered to be taken down and destroyed; by ecclesiastical authority, however, and not "by that of any private person." (Bloxam, vol. iii, p. 90). On the 17th November that year, "at nyghte was pullyd downe the Rode in Powlles with Mary and John, with all the images in the church. Item also, at that same tyme was pullyd downe throrow alle the Kynges domynion in every church alle Roddes (Roods) with alle images and every precher preached in their sermons agayne alle images." (*Ibid*). From that time forth Archbishops and Bishops in their visitations made inquiries whether the Act had been carried out. Thus in 1576, Archbishop Grindal enquired "Whether your roodlofts be taken down and altered, so that the upper part thereof with the soller or loft be quite taken down unto the cross beam, and that the said beam have some convenient crest put upon the same." A lingering affection, however, still clung to them for their beauty and their ancient use; and not a few have survived to our own day, and many more would have remained had it not been for the vandalism, indifference, and utilitarianism of later generations. Of many of them we find still some fragments, even in our restored churches, and of the destruction of others we have written memoranda. Thus, to take the Archdeaconry of Montgomery alone, we have in Cedewain Deanery not only the beautiful remains of the Newtown Screen (of which presently), but also fragments found on the wall-plate at Kerry, from which the new screen in that church has been reconstructed. At Llanmerewig, a portion of the old screen remained *in situ*, and other portions were reproduced by the Rev. John Parker (Vicar 1827-44) in the altar-rails, in the pulpit and desk, and in the front of the gallery; and these have been reconstructed in the restored screen. At Llandyssil, so late as 1798-1802, "the parishioners removed the old rood-loft."

In Pool Deanery, at Buttington, the rood beam and

some remains of the screen are left. At Guilsfield, although the old rood-loft is gone, there still remains the doorway and the staircase that led up to it, as well as some of the tracery of the side screens; but at Welshpool, a petition to the Bishop for its removal (1728-38) alleged that "a great number of the very common sorte of people sit in it (under pretence of psalm singing), who run up and down there; some of them spitting upon people's heads below."

In Caereinion Deanery, a beautiful screen still stands in its place at Llangynyw; and at Llanllugan the rood-beam remains; but at Manafon and Meifod fragments only survive. At Llanerfyl, the minutes of Vestry inform us that on the 15th July, 1675, the rood-loft was ordered to be taken down, except the door under it, which was to be left to make a distinction betwixt the nave and chancel, and that with the timber, seats by way of a gallery were to be erected below the font. A fragment of it, presented by the Rev. J. Mc'Intosh, Rector, may be seen in the Powysland Museum. A richly-carved shrine, however, has escaped destruction. In Llanfyllin Deanery, in the old church of Llanfihangel, there were portions of a screen of very graceful character. At Pennant Melangell, affixed to the front of the west gallery, are considerable remains, representing the legend of St. Melangell and the hare. At Llanrhaiadr the Rural Dean, in 1791, "ordered that y<sup>e</sup> old cancelli be removed;" but some portion was preserved on the ends of two benches in the chancel, and "the footframe is still in the floor, and marks, where it was inserted in the walls, are still to be seen on both sides. Fragments of its carved portions, corresponding in style and workmanship with that at Pennant Melangell, are still to be found forming supports under the benches" (*Mont. Coll.*, 1872, p. 307). At Llangedwyn, the Rural Dean reported in 1749 that the rood-loft had been converted into a gallery for Sir W. Williams' family, who had a seat adjoining to the chapel. At Llanwddyn, some bands of carved foliage

that formed the cornice of the rood-loft in the old church, and some of the bosses from its undervaulting, are fixed in front of the choir stalls in the new church. In the adjoining deanery of Oswestry, within our Powysland, though not in Montgomeryshire, a finely wrought screen has survived at Llanyblodwel. At Whittington, in 1753, the loft was transformed into a pewed gallery, the entrance being by an external staircase. At Selattyn, in 1751, it was "ordered that the cancelli between the church and chancel should be taken away," and the only relic was a small band of the tracery on one of the supporting beams of the gallery, now preserved in the restored church.

Returning to the churches of Montgomeryshire, but outside the diocese of St. Asaph, we find in the adjoining deanery of Arwystli, and diocese of Bangor, the very fine rood-loft at Llanwnnog, which has escaped the fate of the one at Llangurig, which was taken down and appropriated piecemeal during some repairs in 1836, but had fortunately been sketched and described by the Rev. John Parker some eight years before; and that at Llanidloes with its exquisite tracery, which was taken down in 1816, and no trace of it left.

In the deanery of Cyfeiliog, we find at Cemmaes, over the altar, a band of beautifully carved vine-leaf cornice; at Llanbrynmair, now on the pulpit "a fragment of somewhat rude carving, probably from an ancient rood-screen" (*Mont. Coll.*, vol. xix, p. 308), and at Llanwrin the screen itself, with ogee cinquefoiled tracery in the compartments.

The fine rood-loft and screen at Montgomery, in the neighbouring diocese of Hereford, have happily survived the gauntlet of the past; and at Trelystan, in the same diocese, a portion of the arcading with its tracery remains.

At Llananno, just across the border in Radnorshire, is a beautiful rood-loft, which has been described and figured in the *Arch. Camb.*, 4th Ser., vol. v, p. 45.

The Rev. John Parker's drawings include other neighbouring screens, at Llanbadarn Fynydd, Bugeildy, and Bettws, near Clun.

It will be both appropriate and interesting here to quote the statement of the late Mr. Matthew H. Bloxam with regard to rood-loft images, and to give his description at large, especially as it relates to this diocese, though not to this county :—

"Of the rood-loft images, out of the general destruction by authority in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth, I know of one set only that has escaped. This is in the little church of



Carved Wooden Panel from Rood Loft in Bettws Gwerfyl Goch Church.

Bettws Gwerfyl Goch, near Corwen (diocese of St. Asaph), where the image of the Crucifix of St. Mary and St. John, rudely carved on a wooden panel in low relief, and formerly affixed to or in front of the rood-loft, are still preserved and placed as a reredos over the holy table. The panel, 4 ft. 3 ins. wide by 2 ft. 3 ins. in height, is divided into five compartments, each from 7½ ins. to 8 ins. wide. The central compartment contains a rude representation, in low relief, of the Crucifix, the figure of which is very indistinct; on the sides of the head of the cross are the words 'Ecce Homo;' on the compartment on the one side next to the Crucifix, rudely carved in low relief, is the figure of the Blessed Virgin, in a veiled head-dress, a nimbus over the head, and the hands folded on the breast; by her side, in the outward compartment, are represented the pincers, thorns, and nails. In the compartment on the other side of the Crucifix, St. John is represented holding his right hand to his head, and in the

compartment beyond this are carved the hammer, the reed, with hyssop, like a club and spear. The whole is a specimen of very rude carved work of the fifteenth, or early part of the sixteenth, century"<sup>1</sup> (vol. ii, p. 42).

If this panel was ever placed above the screen, it was a very unusual form of the rood, the figures of which stood out clear to the eye, the figure of the



Carved Images of the Blessed Virgin and Our Lord from Mochdre Church.  
(*Photograph by Mr. Jones.*)

Saviour on the Cross being also on a larger scale than

<sup>1</sup> A characteristic distinction between screen work of an earlier date than the fifteenth century and screen work of that period, will be found to consist in the slender cylindrical shafts (often annulated) with moulded bases, and capitals which pertain to the early work of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with the mullion-like and angular edged bars, often faced with small buttresses, which form the principal vertical divisions in that of the fifteenth century (*Ibid.*, 1, 260).



the others ; and if, on the other hand, it was affixed to the screen, it was a very uncommon position for it.

There are, however, in the Powysland Museum two figures, the one of Our Lord, and the other of the Virgin Mother, from Mochdre Church, presented by a former vicar, F. W. Parker (1863-1870), which were undoubtedly parts of the rood, and stood upon the screen ; the third figure, St. John, is missing. We do not know when they were removed from their proper position ; but perhaps it was in 1789, when the vestry "Agreed to build a new gallery from the singing gallery across the church, to join the old gallery," perhaps earlier. At all events, they had been stowed away on the top of the wall-plate, and found there during the restoration of the church in 1867. The Cross to which the figure of Our Lord was attached is gone, and the figure itself is somewhat mutilated and decayed. The height of the figure is 19 ins. ; the arms and feet are gone. The head, with its crown of thorns, is bent forward ; the hair full, the brow deeply furrowed, and an expression of pain rests upon the face. The carving is roughly executed, but the general effect is expressive and sad. The figure of the Virgin is 1 ft.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ins. high, and stands on a pedestal  $1\frac{1}{4}$  ins. She is represented in a long flowing robe, with a long veil falling down her back, and a cloak gathered round the shoulders. She appears to have worn a crown, but the wood is much worm-eaten and decayed, and the hands and nose are gone. The whole shows remains of colouring in white, gold, and vermillion.

Having now traced the general history of these gems of ecclesiastical art, and seen the vicissitudes and perils to which they have been subjected, we are in a better position to appreciate their value, and, I hope, will be more keen to admire the beauty of their design and the extreme delicacy of their workmanship. We in this neighbourhood are fortunate in having preserved to us some excellent specimens, such as those of Montgomery, Llanwnnog, Newtown, Llangynyw, and

Pennant Melangell; and I propose now to treat of them individually and in detail. And it may be as well to say at the outset that of the two faces of the rood-loft, the one looking east towards the altar is, as a rule, more elaborate than the one facing the nave; and to add that the general tradition of their transfer from some dissolved monastic church is not borne out by their own story (except in that of Montgomery); nor is it likely that they who destroyed them in the one place, would go to the great cost of transferring them to another church. The true solution would appear to be that the skilled artists who produced them were members, conversi or lay brethren, of some neighbouring abbey, such as Strata Marcella, Cwm Hir, or Strata Florida, and that in that sense they may have come from thence.

#### LLANWNOG.

The earliest reference I have found to this rood-loft is a brief record in the Rev. Walter Davies's "History of the Parish," which appeared first in the *Cambrian Quarterly Magazine*, 1829 (and was reprinted in vol. iii of *Gwaith Gwallter Mechain*, 1868), which states that "the church contains an ancient relic in a most exquisitely carved rood-loft" (p. 76). In 1830, the Rev. John Parker, then vicar of Llanmerewig, visited the church and made a most careful and artistic drawing of this rood-loft and its details, as well as of the painted glass figure of St. Gwynog; which drawings, through the courtesy of Mr. Stanley Leighton, his nephew, were reproduced, by photo-lithography, to illustrate Mr. D. Walker's account in the *Collections* for 1871. The present illustrations are from excellent photographs by Mr. John Owen, of Newtown.

Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary*, 1833, gives a somewhat fuller note:—

"The church . . . contains some beautiful specimens of ancient sculpture: the screen and rood-loft are exquisitely carved, and in a state of excellent preservation; the chancel

window is embellished with stained glass, in which the Patron Saint is represented in episcopal vestments, with a mitre on his head and a crosier in his hand, and underneath the figure is the inscription, ' Sanctus Gwynocus cujus animæ propitiatur Deus. Amen.'"

This glass, which has been removed from the east window to one on the rood-loft stair<sup>1</sup> in the north wall, is not described quite accurately. The name is



Rood Screen and Loft in Llanwnnog Church : West Side.

(Photograph by Mr. J. Owen.)

not given in the nominative but in the vocative case : "See (Sancte) Gwinnoc (e)," and the invocation, "cujus animæ propitiatur Deus" must have belonged to some other figure, now lost. The figure of the Saint stands within a crocketed canopy of tabernacle work ; and he is vested in an alb, over which is a stole with fringed orphrey, a chasuble and cope. The head is encircled with an aureole, the right hand is raised in blessing,

<sup>1</sup> The steps are formed of rude square blocks of wood.

and the left holds a pastoral staff, richly ornamented, and with the crook turned inwards.

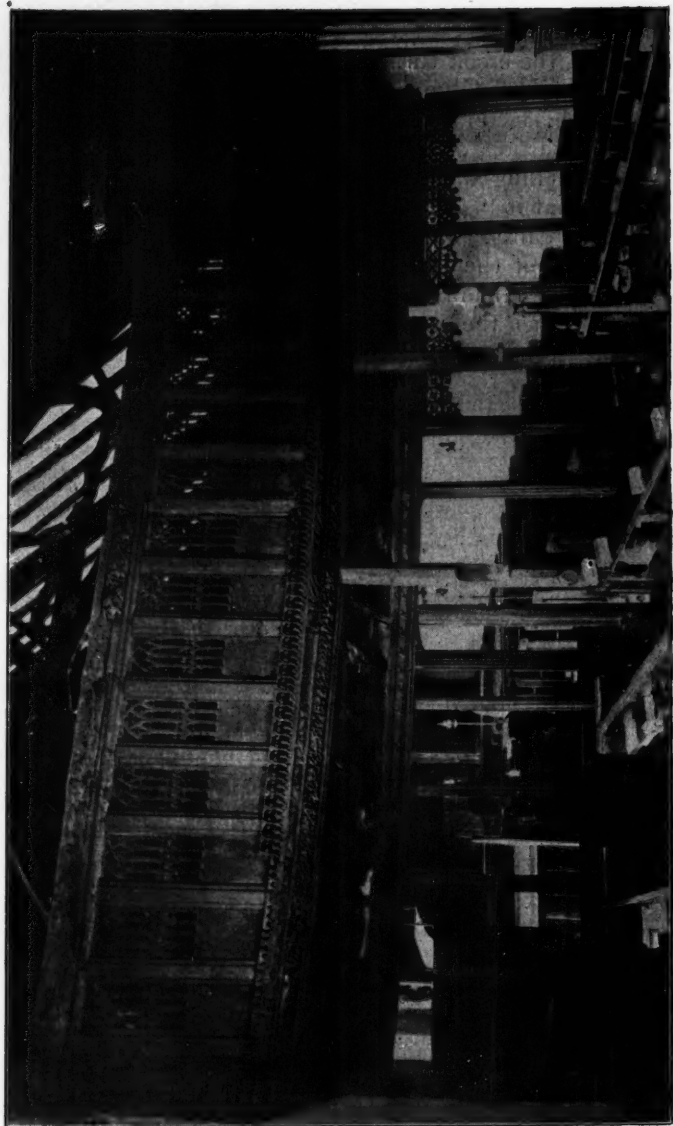
Sir Stephen Glynne,<sup>1</sup> who visited the church in 1855, mentioned as "its great feature the fine rood-loft in fair condition, of Late Perpendicular character, with much panelling and open work to the rood-loft itself;" adding that it "somewhat resembled that at Llananno, in Radnorshire;" and again in 1866, after the partial restoration of the church, he added that "the rood-loft and screen remain complete, though rather rickety. The loft has the usual vine-leaf cornices with Tudor flower, and has panelling, alternately plain and sculptured; below the loft is open tracery, and the *quasi* roof with ribs and bosses, the latter have letters. The overlapping cornice is supported on wood posts; in the centre is the door with pierced spandrels. The west side is the richest, but the east has also panelling."

Still later, in 1871, Mr. David Walker, of Liverpool, contributed to the fourth volume of the *Montgomeryshire Collections* an elaborate account, with illustrations, from which I make the following extract:—

"The position of the screen, which extends the entire width of the nave, is at the distance of about one-third the length of the church, from the east end, and is placed so as effectually to mark the line of demarcation between the nave and the chancel; a rude stair, formed within the thickness of the north wall, on the west side of the screen, leads to the rood-loft, formerly occupied by the choir, the internal dimensions of which are 24 ft. by 7 ft. wide.

"The eastern face indicates an entirely different treatment in several details to the other face; for instance, the front of the loft is spaced for panels of a different degree of richness and character to those on the west front, and the details of the cornices generally are dissimilar, although all have undoubtedly been executed by the same hand, with the exception of the panels on the west front of the rood-loft, which are an unfortunate modern innovation, without an approach to the style of the old work. Admirable in treatment and spirited in execution as this rood-screen undoubtedly is, its denuded

<sup>1</sup> Notes on Old Churches (*Arch. Camb.*, 6th Ser., vol. i, p. 145).



Rood Screen and Loft in Llanwnnog Church : East Side.

(Photograph by Mr. J. Owen.)

state leads one to feel regret that those who were responsible for its preservation in time past should have so far forsaken their trust as to have allowed much of the very beautiful detail that adorned it to be removed, leaving what was once rich and varied in outline now little else than skeleton framing. . . . Owing, in all probability, to a constructional defect in the south wall of the nave, the effect of the screen on the west front is somewhat marred by a deflection in the longitudinal beam.

"By comparing the details of Llanwnnog Screen with those of the Newtown Screen, it will at once be observed what a strong resemblance they bear to each other. The treatment of the foliage and enriched portions generally is unquestionably the work of the same craftsman, and too much cannot be said in praise of the singularly conscientious style in which the work has been executed; the thoroughgoing crispness and vitality given to multitudinous complex geometric forms, combined with perfectly harmonious treatment, render these screens of paramount excellence. What, for instance, can excel the cornices from the Newtown Screen, or the openwork ornament which originally must have crowned the rood-loft? The delicacy with which they are carved is no less striking than the skill in which the requisite light and shade are maintained."

If, however, the treatment of the foliage and enriched portions generally is unquestionably the work of the same craftsman as the Newtown Screen, as Mr. Walker mentions, then the presence here of the Tudor flower and the rose, and the perpendicular openings on the eastern face of this loft, show conclusively that the Newtown Screen could not be of the early date to which he assigns it. The width of the rood-loft is six, not seven, feet; and the flooring is altogether gone, and shows the tracery and ribs of the vaulted panelling beneath. The bosses at the intersections of this paneling are formed, some of foliage and some of letters, most of which appear to be repetitions of I.H.S. ; M. (? Maria); and W.

Two semi-dragons are carved on the lowest band of tracery, one holding in its mouth the stem of a vine branch, the other bending its head on its breast. The panels of the undervaulting are in two patterns: the

upper consisting of a number of foliated circles, the lower of a network of vesicas relieved with inner cusps.

#### NEWTOWN.

This rood-loft stood in the old church until the church was taken down in 1856, and it extended across both the nave and the aisle. The Terrier of 1791 describes it as the "partition between the church and chancel, faced with various old carved work in wood, painted and gault (*sic*), said to have been brought from the Monastery of Abbey Cwmhir, in Radnorshire, at its dissolution."

The Rev. John Parker, c. 1830, made some beautiful drawings of its exquisite details, but unfortunately did not make a sketch of the whole as it then stood—as he did in so many other cases—so that we cannot tell exactly what it looked like. But, happily, Mr. W. Basil Jones<sup>1</sup> saw it in position, and thus described it in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1854, 2nd Ser., vol. v.:—

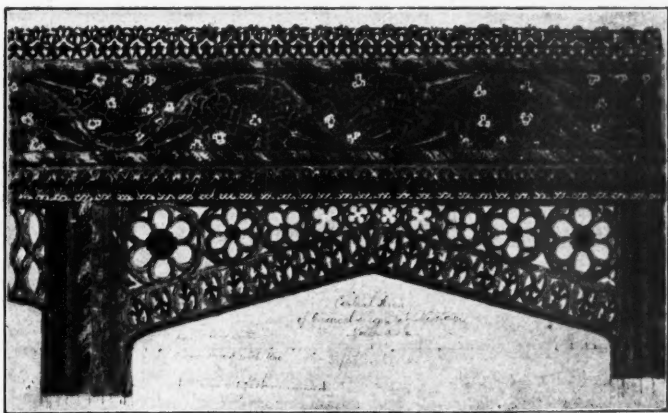
"This is an extremely elaborate specimen of its class, rich with carving and with gold and colour. It runs across both nave and aisle, and is divided into two compartments by one of the wooden piers. The projecting arched canopy, which formed the rood-loft, is not so divided, but forms a single piece. It is now set upright on the top of the screen, and the open parapet, which originally surmounted it, is now fixed behind and concealed by it. The whole is of the Latest Perpendicular, but bears no marks of cinquecento."

From this it is evident that the loft had been previously tampered with, and its form altered; and when it was removed from the old to the new church, further mutilation took place. The lower portion below the open arcade has disappeared altogether; and in order to fit it in as a reredos and sort of dado on the three walls of the small apsidal chancel in the new church, the supporting pillars were shortened, so that it should not interfere with the east window, and the

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Bishop of St. David's, 1874-1897.



central opening widened, so as to enclose the Holy Table. The record of its removal was inscribed on a brass plate attached to it in its new position :<sup>1</sup>—"This screen was removed from the old Parish Church, and restored, and put up in its present form, at the expense and under the direction of the Rev. J. P. Drew, of Milford, by the skill and labour of John Jones, Carver, Parker's Lane, in the year of our Lord, 1856. John Edwards, M.A., Rector; J. P. Drew, W. A. Cooper, Churchwardens." In this position it stood in 1870,



Portion of Carved Rood Screen formerly in Newtown Church.  
(Drawn by Rev. John Parker. Photograph by Mr. T. Pryce.)

when Mr. David Walker, Architect, of Liverpool, made a careful drawing and description of it for the *Montgomeryshire Collections* of that year:—

"The length of the screen, as now fixed, is 32 ft. 4 ins., being about ten feet less than when in its original position across the nave (and aisle) of the old church. The moulded supports under the lower cornice have also been reduced almost four feet in height. The upper portions remain unaltered. The carving and panels are in an excellent state of preservation ;

<sup>1</sup> Nothing is now known of this plate.

and, although dark with age, still bear the tool-marks as fresh as when cut. The enriched and interlaced cornices have traces of colour—vermilion and gold—with which it was at one time decorated, the effect of which, when standing as a rood, must have been considerably heightened by the light through the perforations of the exceedingly rich and varied panelling. The cornices are carved in a remarkably free and characteristic manner; the top cornice represents a conventional treatment of the leek, the middle cornice the vine, and the lower entwined palm leaves; the execution of the work is such that deep relief is obtained, whilst the tendrils and stems are delicate and well under-cut. The variety of the panels is very curious, some of the designs being particularly quaint and very few alike; the hand of the artist is apparent in every line, and it is gratifying to find that so excellent and interesting a monumental remain has escaped mutilation; the date of the work is evidently that of the first half of the fourteenth century.”<sup>1</sup>

This date differs by more than a hundred years from that of Mr. Basil Jones, and, of course, involves a much earlier style; but we ourselves, judging from some features of the design, and from evidence supplied by comparison with Llanwnnog, think that Mr. Basil Jones was right; and we rather wonder at Mr. Walker's satisfaction with the non-mutilation—unless, of course, he meant it by contrast with what might have been.

When, in 1875, the small apse was, in its turn, taken down to make way for the present chancel, the rood-loft was once more removed, and this time the uprights disappeared; and it has not been replaced. It now lies in the cellars at the rectory, where all that can be said for it is that it is in safe keeping from wind and weather. Mr. Fishbourne, when rector, had some hope of replacing what was missing, and putting it up again in the church; and a meeting of the parishioners was held to consider the matter, when it was decided to obtain the opinion of Mr. Kempson, Architect, of Llandaff and Hereford, the designer of the beautiful new reredos at Berriew. Mr. Fishbourne, however, was himself removed soon afterwards to Gresford, and the

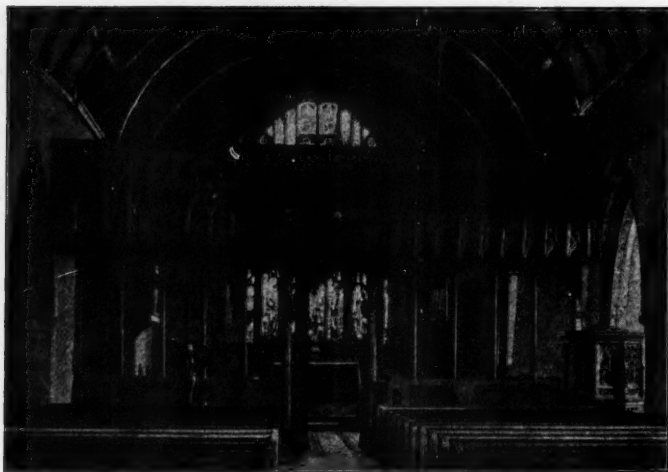
<sup>1</sup> *Mont. Coll.*, 1870, vol. iii, p. 212.

purpose remains in abeyance. But Mr. Kempson has prepared a plan for its restoration, the cost of which is said to be £600. What an opportunity for a memorial, that would at the same time beautify the church and perpetuate the munificence of the restorer!

#### MONTGOMERY.

This is curious, as it combines two screens with the rood-loft: one on the west side facing the nave, with five open arcades on each side of the doorway, and on the east side another screen, with four return miserere stalls on each side. Between the two, at the base, is an open space, now occupied as a ladies' choir, but formerly appropriated as pews. The western screen appears to occupy its original position, and may have had no loft. The spandrels of the arcade are all filled with tracery of the same pattern, that of the entrance being a little wider and more elaborate. The lower portion is concealed by the woodwork of the old pews, used as a casing, but has some ornamentation of Jacobean character inside. Above it, if ever there existed a mooring, or curved roof of panel-work and tracery, it has disappeared, and the space is now filled with almost plain panelling. But above it, forming the western face of the rood-loft, is a series of twenty-four canopies, ogee cinquefoiled, terminating in slender crocketed finials. These are divided from each other by buttresses, which are carried up to the hollow moulding of the beam. The upper part above the canopies is occupied by two rows of open panels, the upper square-headed, the lower with pointed arcading. This, however, differs in character from the screen below it, but corresponds with the flat canopy work of the stalls on the north-western wall of the chancel. A close inspection shows that the western face has been curtailed at the north end, in order to fit the width of the chancel, and the beam on the eastern side lengthened at the south end for the same

purpose. The tradition is—and it is likely to be true—that this screen and its rood-loft were brought hither from Chirbury Priory, some time after its dissolution. The arcade, now open, has evidently been filled with boarding<sup>1</sup> and tracery-panels, for the grooves remain, similar to that preserved on the north wall.<sup>2</sup> Whether the western face ever stood on the east side of the loft or not, I cannot say; but, in any case, one of the faces of the loft is missing. Of late, some plain panelled



Rood Screen and Loft in Montgomery Church : West Side.

boarding supplied its place, and an inscription on one of the pieces tells when and by whom it was put up.

BLT . BY . MO' . RECTR . JANVARY . 1718 .<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this was to exclude draughts; one effect of it, according to Durandus, was to prevent the laity in the nave joining with the clergy and choir in the singing.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Parker, in his drawing of this side of the screen, here by kind permission reproduced, has replaced the tracery, to restore its original appearance.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Owen was curate from 1670-1678, and afterwards rector for forty-three years; he died in 1721.

On either side of the entrance were wings with



Rood Screen in Montgomery Church: East Side.

(Drawn by Rev. J. Parker. Photograph by Mr. T. Pryce.)

panels of open Tudor tracery ; some of which have been worked into the front of the new choir-benches. The thick coating of pale drab paint which encases the

whole work effectually prevents seeing whether it was originally set off with colour.

The rood-loft rests on a plain stone corbel on the south side, and is approached by a narrow stone staircase, leading from the Pointed door in the south wall of the chancel, in the thickness of the wall, which, however, projects slightly on the outside.

This constructive feature appears to indicate that there was a rood-loft here as early as the erection of the chancel; and, I take it, of earlier date than the western screen: but who transported the Chirbury Screen hither? We have no documentary evidence whereby to answer this question; but the principal family in the parish in the latter half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries was undoubtedly the Herberts, who were the Governors of the Castle, and it may be that George Herbert has a covert allusion to this in the opening stanza of his poem on "The Cross."

"What is this strange and uncouth thing  
To make me sigh, and seek, and faint and die,  
Until I had some place where I might sing,  
And serve Thee; and not only I  
But all my wealth and family might combine  
To set Thy honour up, as our design."

In support of this it may be noted that on either side of the western entrance is an angel bearing a shield, which in the one case is blank, but in the other bears a sheaf of arrows—the Herbert crest.

And it is still more likely that what he may so often have looked upon with reverence as a boy—on the rood of his parish church—may have suggested those other pathetic stanzas on "The Church."

"O all ye who pass by, behold and see!  
Man stole the fruit, but I must climb the tree;—  
The tree of life to all, but only me.  
Was ever grief like mine?

"Lo! here I hang, charged with a world of sin:  
The greater world o' the two; for that came in  
By words, but this by sorrow I must win.—  
Was ever grief like mine?"

## PENNANT MELANGELL.

Towards the end of the last century, that observant traveller, Thomas Pennant, records that he paid a visit to "the Shrine of St. Monacella, or, as the Welsh style her, Melangell":—

"Her legend relates that she was the daughter of an Irish monarch, who had determined to marry her to a nobleman of his court. The princess had vowed celibacy. She fled from her father's dominions and took refuge in this place, where she lived fifteen years without seeing the face of a man. Brochwel Yscythrog, Prince of Powys, being one day a hare hunting, pursued his game till he came to a great thicket; when he was amazed to find a virgin of surpassing beauty, engaged in deep devotion, with the hare he had been pursuing under her robe, boldly facing the dogs, who retired to a distance howling; notwithstanding all the efforts of the sportsmen to make them seize their prey. Even when the huntsman blew his horn, it stuck to his lips. Brochwel heard her story, and gave to God and her a parcel of lands, to be a sanctuary to all that fled there. He desired her to found an abbey on the spot. She did so, and died abbess at a good old age. She was buried in the neighbouring church, called Pennant, and from her distinguished by the addition of Melangell. Her hard bed is shown in the cleft of a neighbouring rock. Her tomb was in a little chapel, or oratory, adjoining to the church, and now used as a vestry room. This room is still called 'Cell-y-bedd,' or the Cell of the Grave. Her reliques as well as her image have been long since removed; but I think the last is still to be seen in the churchyard. The legend is perpetuated by some rude wooden carving of the Saint, with numbers of hares scuttling to her for protection. She properly became their Patroness. They were called 'Wyn Melangell' (St. Monacella's Lambs.)"

Portions of the carved stone shrine still exist in the wall of the church and the lych-gate.

Her popularity is attested, not only by the large offerings made at her shrine in pre-Reformation days ("Oblaciones ad reliquias," £2 16s. 8d.), but by many more recent pilgrimages to this most beautiful spot,

<sup>1</sup> *Tour in Wales*, vol. iii, p. 173 (ed. 1810).



which has been apostrophised with its story in the following descriptive lines copied from Mr. Parker's "Book of Drawings :"—

THE VALE OF PENNANT.

" A Vale in the heathclad hills  
Concealed in the moors of Berwyn ;  
A Vale among Celtic deserts  
In the border of Powysland ;  
A Vale of Retreat from the world,  
Yet lovely with waving bowers :  
This was thine abode, O Melangell !  
Thy cloister, O Maid of the North !

" A Church in the secret vale,  
A secret and solemn refuge,  
Where the foe dropp'd the sword of warfare  
And remembered the fear of the Lord ;  
A tomb in the hallowed ground,  
A grave in the woodland Valley ;  
This was thy bed, O Yorwerth !  
Thou first born of Owen Gwyneth.

" A stream in the highland Vale,  
A foaming and roaring torrent,  
That falls down the cavern'd rocks  
From the height of the mountain above.  
O, beautiful Vale of Pennant !  
This is thy Cathedral Service,  
Pride of the north western Valleys,  
Both music and poem to thee."

In another tone, we find, in the *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, by his son-in-law, a playful and amusing letter in rhyme, addressed to his little daughter, Edith May, on April 25th, 1820, after one of his many visits to his friend, the Right Hon. C. W. Williams-Wynn, at Llangedwyn :—

" I was obliged to stay | at Llangedwyn till to-day ; | though  
I wished to come away, | Wynn would make me delay | my  
departure yesterday | in order that he | and I might go and  
see | a place whereof he | once sent a drawing to me. | And  
now I'll tell you why | it was proper that I | should go thither  
to espy | the place with my own eye. | 'Tis a church in a vale |

whereby hangs a tale, | how a hare being pressed | by the  
 dogs and much distressed | the hunters coming nigh | and the  
 dogs in full cry | look'd about for someone to defend her | and  
 saw just in time | as it now comes pat in rhyme | a Saint of  
 the feminine gender. And so on."

Again, ten years later, in a poem on the "Portrait of Bishop Heber," he recounted an excursion from Llangedwyn, in which they

"Together sought Melangel's lonely church  
 Saw the dark yews, majestic in decay,  
 Which in their flowering strength  
 Cyfeiliog might have seen;  
 Letter by letter traced the lines  
 On Iorwerth's fabled tomb;  
 And curiously observed what vestiges,  
 Mouldering and mutilate,  
 Of Monacella's legend there are left  
 A tale humane, itself  
 Well nigh forgotten now."

To the facile and skilful pen of the Rev. John Parker, so often already alluded to, we owe both an excellent drawing and the detailed description, contributed in 1848 to the Third volume of the *Archæologia Cambrensis* :—

"The original situation of this curious fragment is uncertain. At present, it is fixed in the front of the west gallery; but although it is not easy to point out any place that would exactly suit it, I imagine it must have been a part of the western side of the rood-loft, or of a gallery above the screen.

"Within the branch work of a running border, such as is frequent in chancel screens, and enclosed in casement mouldings, the legend of St. Melangell, or Monacella, is represented. The cleverness and ingenuity with which the story is told, in spite of the trammels imposed upon the artist by the requirements of the running border, are deserving of remark. The various figures, although carved in equally strong relief, and occupying equal intervals of the branch work and foliage in the running border, are nevertheless at five several distances in point of size. There is no grouping. The workmanship is minute, but rather grotesque; and the different animals are all, more or less, out of drawing. They are painted in red and pink

and white; the tracery panels under them, alternately red and blue; the leading members of some pale colour. The branch-work and the foliage are also of light colours; but the chromatic decorations are much faded, and there is not light enough to ascertain them.

"I.—First compartment. Brochwel Yscythrog, Prince of Powys, on horseback; his bridle tied on the mane of the horse; both arms extended; in his right hand a sword which he is brandishing. He wears long hair under a flat cap; a close-fitting coat and girdle, both painted red, and sits in the high saddle of the Middle Ages. He is the most distant figure of the series.

"II.—The second compartment is partly damaged in the branch-work, but the figure is entire. The huntsman, half-kneeling, tries in vain to remove the horn, which he was raising to his lips for the purpose of blowing it, when it remained fast and could not be sounded.

"III.—In the third, St. Melangell, or Monacella, is represented as an abbess; her right hand slightly raised; her left hand grasping a foliated crozier; a veil upon her head. The figure, seated on a red cushion, is larger than that of Brochwel, and smaller than that of the huntsman.

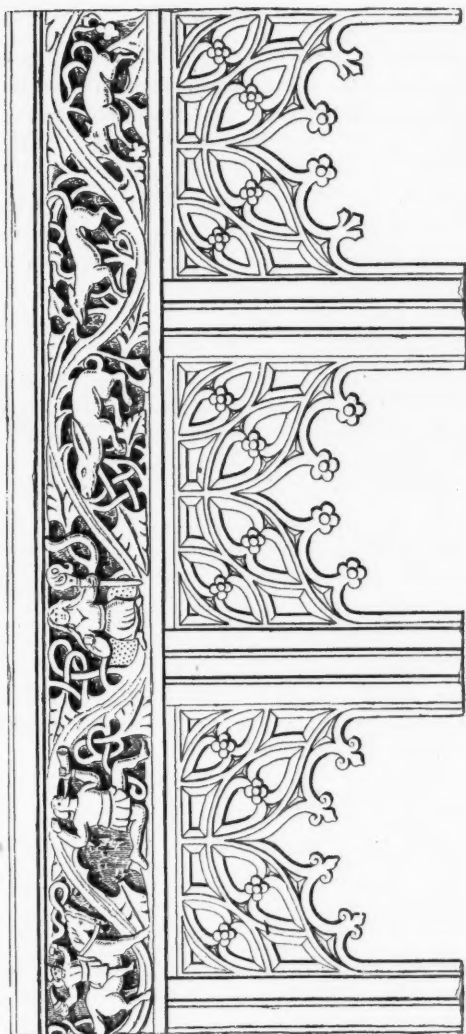
"IV.—A hunted hare, crouching or scuttling towards the figure of the Saint. The hare is painted red.

"V.—A greyhound in pursuit; the legs, entangled among the branches of the running border, can hardly be distinguished from them. The dog is painted of a pale colour.

"VI.—A nondescript animal, intended, I suppose, for a dog. In this and the V<sup>th</sup> compartment the hounds are supposed to be further from the eye than the hare, which is the largest figure in the whole range.

"One tracery panel has its gouge-work painted red; the gouge-work of the next is blue; that of the next is red; and so on alternately."

The screen itself, on the rood-loft of which the above formed a cornice or frieze, still remains in its position between the chancel and the nave. It comprises four compartments on each side of the doorway, or entrance, which is just double the width of the side divisions; the spandrels are filled with tracery of the same design, and of fourteenth-century character.



*H. Shaw sculp.*

SCREEN, PENNANT MELANGELL.

*J. Parker del.*

## LLANYBLODWEL.

Although Llanyblodwel is not actually in the county, a part of it was in early times the property of the Lord of Pennant Melangell, who was also Lord of Bryn, and of Ruyton of the Eleven Towns. There was, moreover, an ecclesiastical as well as a civil tie between the two places; for the township of Bryn paid a portion of its tithes to the vicar of Pennant. This church, too, like Pennant, has its screen, though it has not its legend; and it still remains to mark the division between the nave and north aisle, and their chancel and chantry respectively. Along the western face of the beam runs a band of tracery, in which, as there, animal carvings are found amid the entwining foliage, and there is a further correspondence in the fragment of an ancient coffin-lid in the churchyard, with its hunting legend, forming, it may be, the connecting link with the donor of the screen.

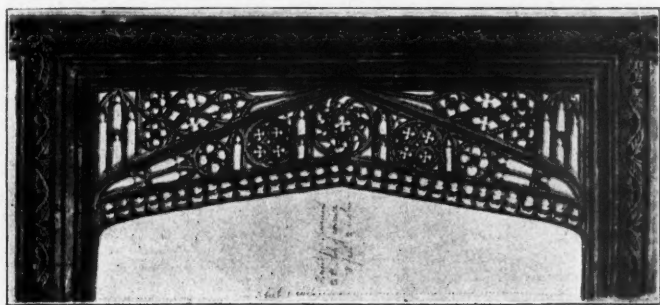
This screen, mentioned by Vicar Worthington in 1736, in connection with a dispute concerning a seat, extends across the nave and north aisle, and contains arcading of eighteen bays, with similar tracery in each compartment, that is, two arches with an ogee crocketed finial within each. It was considerably repaired and renovated through the care of Mr. John Parker, the vicar from 1844 to 1860.

## LLANGURIG.

In the *History of the Parish of Llangurig*, by Mr. Edward Hamer and Mr. Howell W. Lloyd, 1875, we have this account:—

“On the north side of the chancel are to be seen traces of a narrow winding stone staircase, which formerly led to the rood-loft, which existed in the church previous to the year 1836. Remains of ‘an elaborately-carved screen and rood-loft are still preserved,’ is the statement made in Lewis’s *Topographical Dictionary*, published in 1833. Three years later, when the church was repaired, the screen and loft were taken down, and

the churchwardens, who must have been ignorant of its value, allowed anyone who expressed a desire to become possessed of samples of the tracery to carry away specimens, so that literally, bit by bit, it disappeared, and not a vestige of it was left when Mr. Evans, the present vicar, was appointed to the living in 1852. It was, undoubtedly, the principal object of interest in the church, and its fate is a sad example of the shameful neglect and utter indifference through which so many similar relics have disappeared from the churches of the neighbourhood. Fortunately the late Rev. John Parker, of Llanbyblodwel, visited the church in the summer of 1828, and his artistic and accurate pencil has preserved for us admirable drawings of the screen, which, through the kindness of Sir Baldwin Leighton, we are able to reproduce."



Portion of Rood Screen in Llangurig Church.  
(Drawn by Rev. J. Parker. Photograph by Mr. T. Pryce.)

When Sir Stephen Glynne saw it about the year 1829, "a large portion of the rood-loft screen remained, having pretty good carved wood-work and vine-leaf cornice."<sup>1</sup>

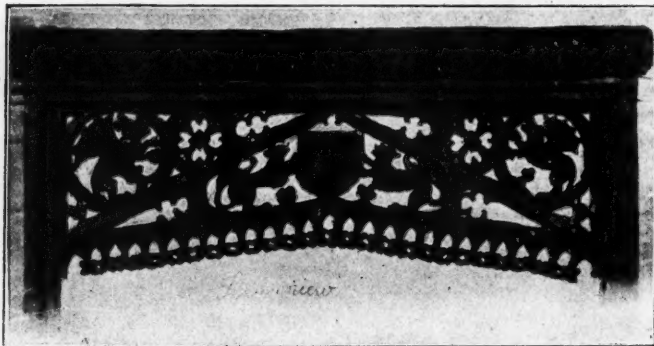
In "A Description of the Church," by Col. Lloyd-Verney of Clochfaen, 1892, Mr. Arthur Baker, who superintended the restoration of the church under Sir Gilbert Scott, R.A., in 1878, assigns the rood screen to the last quarter of the fifteenth century, c. 1475, and states that the only relic found remaining was a frag-

<sup>1</sup> Notes on Old Churches, in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1901.

ment of the carved cornice, which had been replaced in its original position, and notes that in general design the screen is similar to many others in Montgomeryshire and other parts of Wales; the centre arch being of a characteristic local type, and like one at Gyffylliog, near Ruthin, and one at the church (Llangynyw), near Meifod.

#### LLANGYNYW.

This screen remains *in situ*, and consists of five bays on either side of the entrance; but most



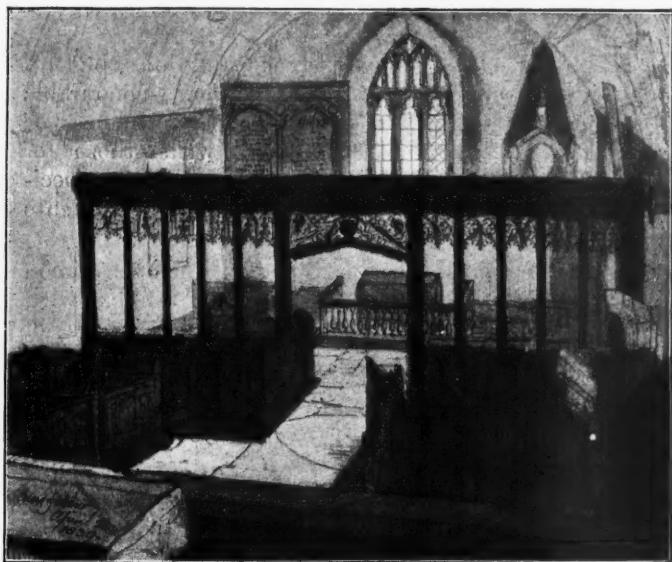
Rood Screen in Llangynyw Church.

(Drawn by Rev. J. Parker. Photograph by Mr. T. Pryce.)

of the supporting pillars have been cut off just below the tracery. The designs of the tracery are worked out in six patterns of much beauty, and that above the entrance is heraldic, and may give the clue to the donor. On either side of an impaled shield a lion guardant passant stands as a supporter, and in the spandrels above, within foliated circles, a winged dragon. At the west end, under the gallery, is a corresponding piece, with the shield and supporters above and the dragons below; a graceful cresting finishes off the bottom. The beam is cased with a rich



band of the pomegranate pattern on the chancel side ; but on the west it is of plainer character, of alternate ragule and inclined ribbon patterns, similar to one of the bands on the Llanwnnog loft, except above the entrance, which has a piece of vine-carving affixed. This fact, combined with the second spandrel, seems to show that there must have been a canopy of some kind



Rood Screen in Llangynyw Church.

(*Drawn by Rev. J. Parker. Photograph by Mr. T. Pryce.*)

over this portion. Probably the screen was surmounted at one time by a rood-loft, and when that was taken down, in accordance with Archbishop Grindal's enquiry, a band of the carved work was placed on the east side of the beam, and the ruder carving on the west added, and the whole surmounted with a "convenient crest." The heraldic device may point to the "Red Dragon" of Powys and the "Lion" of the Lords of Powys of the

House of Cynvyn, to whom Mathrafal, with most of the parish, belonged.

The illustration has been photographed by Mr. Pryce, of Pentreheylin, from one of the beautiful sketches made by the Rev. John Parker, and kindly placed at our service by Mr. Stanley Leighton, M.P.

### MODERN.

There are some modern screens and lofts, put up within the last few years, which deserve honourable mention. Although for elaboration and richness of detail they cannot be compared with those of Llanwnnog and Newtown, they are, all of them, specimens of excellent workmanship, and great ornaments to their churches.

1. *GUILDSFIELD*.—The compartments of the open screen are broad and high, and the spandrels filled with geometrical tracery, which may be best described as of the rose character. It has the vaulted overhanging canopy, but no loft, properly so called. It was designed by Mr. Street.

2. *LLANSANTFFRAID*, like *Guildsfield*, has the vaulted canopy and no loft; and its pointed arcading is filled with decorated tracery of more varied and graceful character. It was designed by Mr. J. O. Scott, and is a memorial to Mrs. Hayhurst, of Melyniog, and late of Ystymcolwyn.

*MANAFON*.—This screen consists of one narrow compartment and two wide ones on each side of a very wide entrance. The tracery is Perpendicular, and formed of adjoining foliated spaces. The cresting is of an uncommon form. The design was by Messrs. Douglas and Fordham, and the screen was presented by Mrs. Williams, of Henllys and of Barmouth.

*LLANFECHAIN* screen consists of three equal compartments on each side of the entrance, having the heads filled with Perpendicular, varied with geometrical

tracery. It is surmounted by a Tudor cresting, and has over the centre a Calvary Cross. It was designed by Mr. Douglas of Chester.

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When we turn from screens and rood-lofts to the cognate subject of churchyard and wayside crosses, it is remarkable that there is not, as far as I know, a single instance of the survival of either the one or the other in the county; and this notwithstanding the far more durable material of which they were made; nor can I recall to mind more than one place-name that seems to hand them down: that of "Gungrog" (Cefn Grog) near Welshpool. The adjoining Abbey of Strata Marcella, with its township of Tirymynech (Monksland), would readily explain the name, were it not that it appears to be of much earlier date than the Abbey. It is not, I believe, because they never existed; the bases of some of them may still be doing duty for sundials; yet we have no record of their demolition. Their non-existence now, however, is the more noticeable by way of contrast to the adjoining counties. Thus in Merionethshire we have the extremely early Cadfan Stone at Towyn, and all but the head of the cross at Corwen. In Flintshire we find the Celtic crosses of Maen Achwyfan and Dyserth, with the mediæval crosses of Hanmer and Newmarket, and in Denbighshire Eliseg's Pillar (the head of the cross is lost), of the ninth century, and the fourteenth-century cross in the Churchyard of Derwen. This last is the more significant, because it controverts the plea that where there was a rood within the church a cross outside would be superfluous, and that *vice versâ*, a churchyard cross would render an inside rood unnecessary; for here at Derwen both evidently co-existed. The four faces of the cross bear sculptured representations of the Holy Trinity, the Judgment, the Virgin and Child, and the Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. John at the foot; but this last is the rood. In the church, and in

excellent preservation, is a fine roodloft, with sixteen panels ornamented with tracery, and having a band of the vine pattern as a cornice. In the top of the western beam and at its central point is a socket, or mortise, to receive the foot of the rood, which would face the congregation. This, indeed, is no longer there, but its witness remains. It is worthy of mention that this parish adjoins that of Bettws; and their two churches, which are only about five miles apart, are both of them noteworthy for their rare ecclesiastical remains.<sup>1</sup>

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*Mem.*—This article was written in the first instance for, and read in part before, the Newtown Clerical Association; and has subsequently been enlarged and illustrated for its present use.

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 94.

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## THE HERMITAGE OF THEODORIC, AND THE SITE OF PENDAR.

BY THOMAS GRAY, ESQ., M. INST. C.E.

### I.

BEFORE January, 1894, I was unaware of a hermitage having existed in these parts. At this date, Miss Talbot kindly sent me volume i of the *Margam and Penrice MSS.*, by Dr. W. de Gray Birch; and in it I found that a mile or so from where I live in the parish of Margam, there existed as far back, and probably before the year A.D. 1147, the Hermitage of Theodoricus; but where was it situated? No ruins existed to mark its site, no tradition survived about it, and the building had disappeared completely.

In the earliest charters of Margam Abbey we find mentioned as a landmark the Hermitage of Theodoric; but as no ruins indicated its position, it was not possible to fix its site. The original charter founding the Abbey of Margam is not extant; but its text is found in an *Inspeximus* by Edward le Despenser, Lord of Glamorgan and Morgan, dated July 13th, 1358, of an *Inspeximus* by Hugh le Despenser, dated Oct. 9th, 1338. In this document the Earl William notifies to the Bishop Nicholas<sup>1</sup> and others concerned, that he has confirmed the gift which Robert<sup>2</sup> his father gave to the monks of Clairvaux: "That is to say all the lands which extend between Kenfig and the further bank

<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1149-1183.

<sup>2</sup> Robert of Caen, natural son of Henry I, King of England, Consul or Earl of Gloucester. He became possessed of these lands by his marriage with Mabilia, the heiress of Robert Fitzhamon, the leader of the Norman knights, who retained Kenfig and district in addition to Cardiff as his share of the conquest.

of the water of the further Afan, which is to the west of the Hermitage of Theodoricus as the water aforesaid descends from the mountains. All this land I grant to the monks as it goes through the mountains,

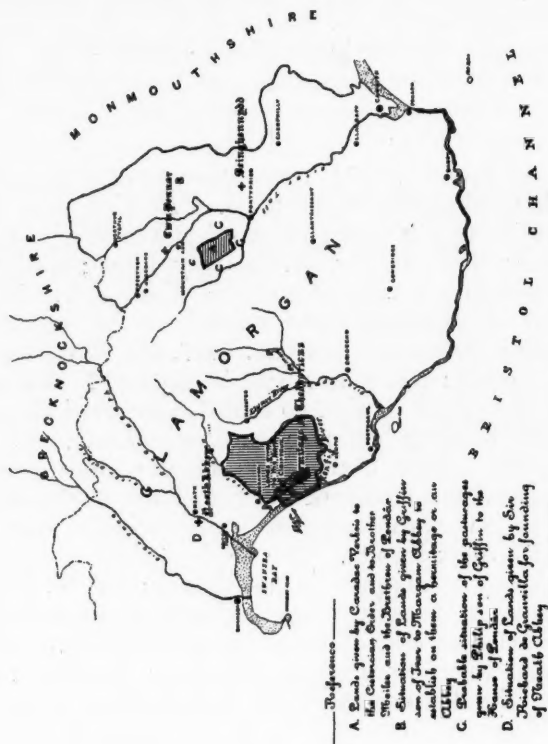


Fig. 1.—Map of Lands given to the Monks of Clairvaux, and Grants of Land by Caradoc Uerbeis to Pendar, etc.

namely, from the source of Kenefeg water between the source of Rudelf (Ffrwdwyllt) and Gelli-fret (Gellivrieth) on to Red-Kewelthi (Rhyd Gyfylchi), that is the ford of Kewelthi, into Aven (Afan river) in wood and in

plain, in fields and in pastures and waters, in moors and marshes, also all the fisheries of Aven, that no one may interfere with them on the other side, nor put their hand to fishing in the whole of Aven except by their consent."

This certainly points to the site of the Hermitage as being near the river Afan, where it falls into the sea, and just to the east of it.

In the midst of the lonely sand-dunes near the old mouth of the River Afan (in 1836-38 it was diverted, and is now further west), some fifteen or sixteen years

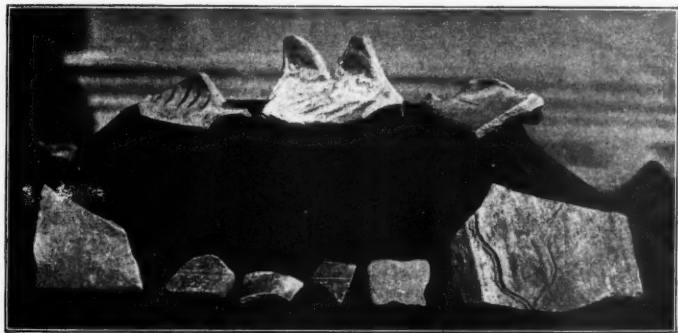
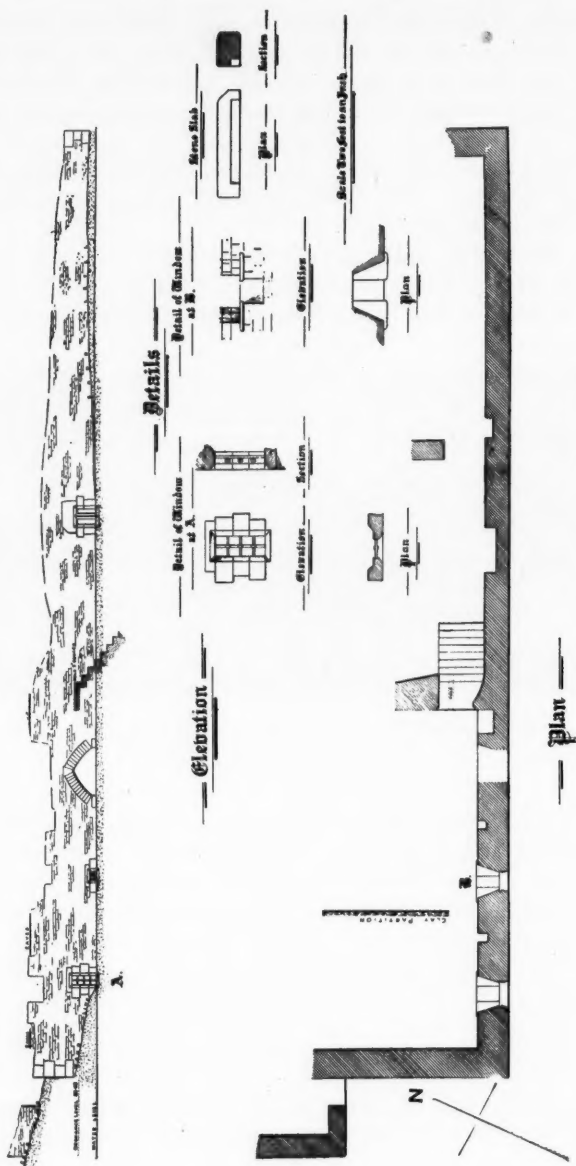


Fig. 2.—Ridge and Flat Green-Glazed Tiles, and Fragments of Earthenware Vessels from the Hermitage of Theodoric.

ago, I picked up a tile-stone having a neatly-made nail-hole at the top part; and later I discovered part of a wall; still later I found some green glazed earthenware tiles, ridge and flat,<sup>1</sup> and several pennant-stone tiles, similar to the first one I found. Three years ago I had the sand cleared off around a pile of stones, and found a building about 85 ft. in length, which is here shown in elevation and plan: water then prevented further clearing of the ruins. I have recently (in this year)

<sup>1</sup> See p. 149, No. 66, *Arch. Camb.*, April, 1900, illustrations of similar old ridge-tiles found in Llantwit Major Church.





Elevation and Plan of Hermitage of Theodoric.

discovered among the ruins part of a piscina or holy-water stoup.

The three upper story windows were dormer windows. The stone work of the centre one, under the seat-like slabs, is of dressed green Collwn or Quarella stone, the

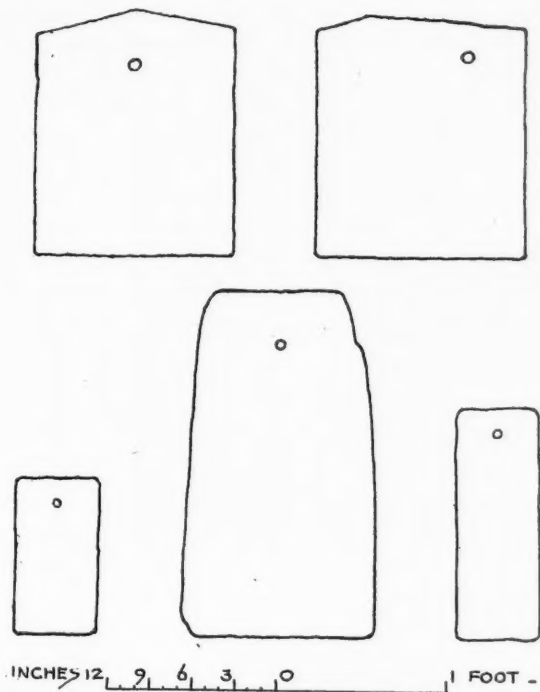


Fig. 3.—Roof-tiles of Pennant Stone from the Hermitage of Theodoric.

other two are in rubble masonry. The quoins, jambs of the windows, and mullion of the easternmost window, and the long slab and base of a pillar, are of the same green stone, with the exception of three Sutton stones in the jambs of the westernmost window.

The iron stanchions and saddle-bars in the western-

most window and in the small centre window are well preserved, as also are the shutter-hooks still remaining inside the easternmost window. The key is simply rust, being completely oxidised.

I consider the fact of the iron-work being so little wasted somewhat of a proof of the rapid be-sanding of the ruins, which covered up the iron-work and preserved it from the action of the salt sea air, so injurious to iron.

The small window west of the doorway is 10 ins.

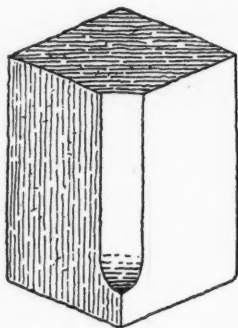


Fig. 4.—Base of Pillar, Green Collwn Stone, from the Hermitage of Theodoric.

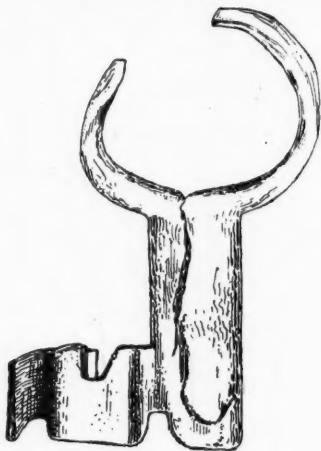


Fig. 5.—Key found in the Ruins of the Hermitage of Theodoric.

wide by 7 ins. high ; it has three iron stanchions and one saddle-bar.

The stoup or piscina was found in the sand in the eastern part of the building, indicating clearly the position of the chapel. The stoup is carved in Sutton stone.

Through the top step on the left side in descending is a hole, 5 ins. square, which continues through the block of masonry ; it probably held the upper part of a hand-rail. The narrowness of the steps, 7 ins.

tread and 7 ins. rise, would necessitate the use of a hand-rail.

The remains of walls at a considerable distance from the main building shows the establishment was an extensive one. The true meridian is marked on the plan, and shows the orientation of the chapel to be 12 deg. north of east.

No part of the north walls of the building have been uncovered; they lie under a high hill of sand.



Fig. 6.—The Holy-Water Stoup, found among the Ruins of the Hermitage of Theodoric.

On referring to the paper on Llantwit Major Church, in the April (1900) number of the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, by Mr. G. E. Halliday, it will be seen that the green glazed ridge-tiles found in the church are very similar to those found at the Hermitage. Similar tiles were found in Nicholaston Church, Gower (Davies' *West Gower*, vol. iv, Plate opposite p. 496). It is stated (p. 403) that similar ridge-cresting has recently been found at Cardiff Castle.

Finding these ancient ruins exactly where the charters indicated the Hermitage, or Grange of the

Hermitage, to be, I came to the conclusion I had discovered the ruins of it. The discovery of the stoup or

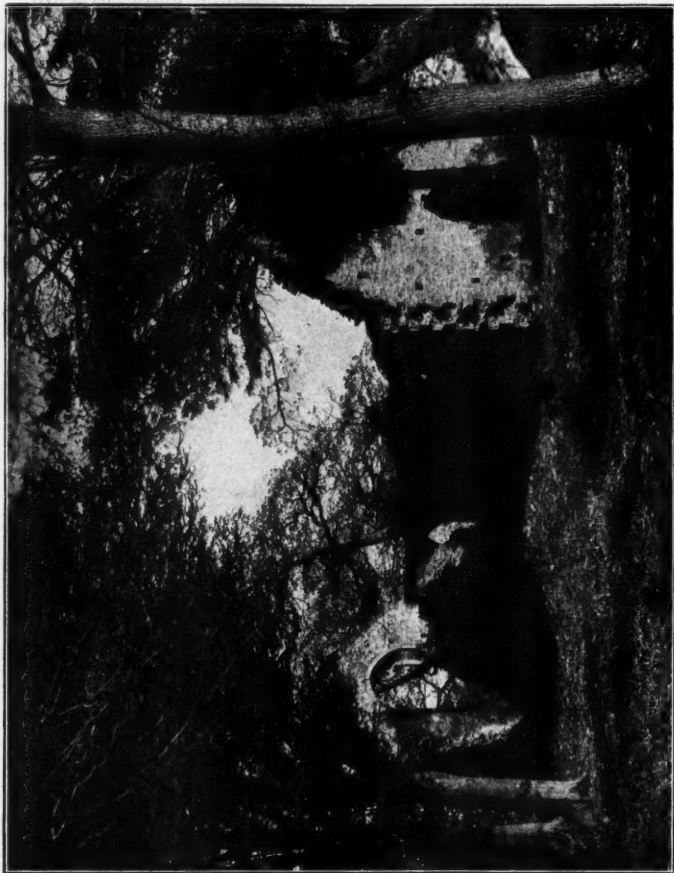


Fig. 7.—The Chapel of Cryke (Crugwallt).

piscina shows a chapel was attached to the Grange, and I have no doubt if further clearing were undertaken the small chapel would be found: it seems probable that the flat, and one of the three kinds of ridge or crest

tiles, came from the chapel. With regard to the stoup or piscina, the eminent architect and antiquary, Mr.

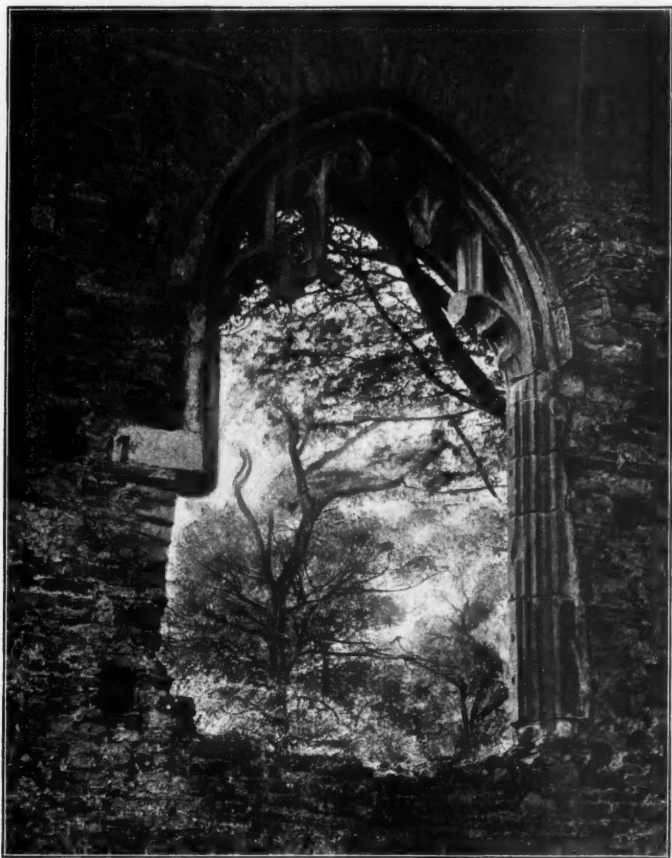


Fig. 8.—East Window of Cryke Chapel (Crugwallt).

J. T. Micklethwaite, F.S.A., writes me : "The fragment you have found may belong either to a holy-water stoup or to a piscina. Very likely, the circle of the bowl was



Fig. 9.—West Window of the Chapel of Cryke (Crugwallt).

completed under a niche in the wall. There is no detail to fix the date exactly, but I think it not earlier than the thirteenth century, and it may well be the



fourteenth." The Hermitage itself apparently gave way to the Grange upon the Abbey becoming established ;



Fig. 10. — Interior of the Chapel of Cryke.

and as the farms were worked by the *conversi*, or lay brethren, chapels for their use were attached to the granges, as in this instance. Thus Bishop Elias gave permission to the Abbot and Convent of Margam to

celebrate services in their "Grangia de Melis,"<sup>1</sup> A.D. 1239.

We find chapels were attached to the Court Farm (the "Grangia de Melis") at Port Talbot Station, probably the Chapel of St. Thomas; this chapel is still in existence.<sup>2</sup> Penhydd Waelod, near Bryn; Hafod: the Chapel of this Farm, stood until recently. Crug-

<sup>1</sup> "The Grangia de Melis." So named from the word "melys," sweet; the land which is occasionally covered by the tidal waters, and the grass thereby made sweet for sheep, which thrive well upon it. Meols, in Wirral, on the Cheshire coast, has a similar meaning (Dr. Birch, *History of Margam Abbey*).

<sup>2</sup> Professor Westwood says the Port Talbot Stone, near Court Farm, was evidently intended to commemorate the St. Thomas to whom the neighbouring, but now long-destroyed, Capel St. Thomæ was dedicated. I believe St. Thomas's Chapel is the building in the Court Farm known as "Yr Hen Gapel." The locating of the site of the Chapel of St. Thomas at the Court Farm, the "Grangia de Melis," may not be readily accepted, by reason of Professor Westwood's quotation which follows: "the stone evidently intended to commemorate the neighbouring but now long-destroyed" Capell S. Thomæ in terrâ quam W. Comes Gloucestriae dedit Willelmus filio Henrici *inter aquas de Avene et Neth* (italics are mine). From a charter of confirmation by Nicholas, Bishop of Llandaff.

A Harley Charter 75c. 36; Clark, DCCCXXVIII, proves that the Chapel of St. Thomas stood to the east of the river Afan, and not between the waters of Afan and Neath. In the deed Leissan<sup>1</sup> and Avein,\* sons of Morgan, promise the monks of Margam not to dig or plough the land between the Walda of the English "Gwal Saeson" and Meles in Avene Marsh (see Note 1), for they and their father have given the pasture of all the lands, arable and not arable, in "Melis," in moor and in marsh, to the monks, between Avene and the Chapel of St. Thomas.

The "Gwal Saeson" is a stone wall which originally extended from the River Afan to the River Ffrwdwyllt, passing just south of the Court Farm along its fields. At the point where the wall joined the Afan the river runs at right angles to it, but after continuing about 430 yards in a south-westerly direction, the river turns to the south-east and runs parallel with the wall at about 430 to 450 yards distance from it.

The greater part of the wall is in existence, and is still known as the "Gwal Saeson"; it and the River Afan (as it ran then) and the Ffrwdwyllt River enclosed a parallelogram of about 1500 yards by

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\* Occur in A.D. 1200-1205.

wallt; Trisant,<sup>1</sup> the chapel probably called in the Abbey deeds the Chapel of Hafodheulog; Eglwysnunydd,<sup>2</sup> Stormy, Corneli, Resolven, near Neath; Llangewydd, Tre-y-gedd, Baidden, Llanfeithun, and at the Grange of Theodoricus.

I was inclined to think the name implied the dedication of the Chapel of the Grange to St. Theodoric, but since reading in Dr. de Gray Birch's *Neath Abbey* that Sir Richard de Grandvilla had two nephews, Giraldus and Theodoricus,<sup>3</sup> I think with Dr. Birch that the latter probably founded the Hermitage. Had the dedication been to St. Theodoric, the monks would have been careful to call it the Grange of the Hermitage of St. Theodoricus. In the Bull of Pope Urban III, referred to elsewhere, he names it the Grange of Theodoric's Hermitage. The Pope would have been careful to name it by its dedication; the

430, or 1400 acres; the most of it is now covered by the water of the Float.

This deed, and the sepulchral stone to St. Thomas found near the Court Farm, proves clearly that the "Capell St. Thomae," was, and probably is, at that farm.

<sup>1</sup> Capel Trisant.

<sup>2</sup> Eglwysnunydd; Nunydd is probably a later form, as "dd" was not in use at the time the chapel was built, the "dd" only coming into use after the fourteenth century (see Stephens' *Lit. of the Kymry*). Doubtless Nynydd is the Welsh adaptation of Non, or Nonnita, or Nonna. "Egloose Nunney" it is called in the Crown Sale to Sir R. Manxell, Knt., A.D. 1543, and here we have phonetically the key to the ancient spelling of the modern Nunydd; Nunney indicating Nynydd or Nonna. The Norman scribes and their successors, in compiling deeds relating to the Abbey, wrote phonetically words they could not spell: Gyfylchu they write Kewelthi; Rheanell Brook, Ranel, called to this day Ranallt, although named on Ordnance Maps Arnallt. Breton legends state that the miracle play of St. Nonna was performed at Dirinon, a parish in Brittany (Baring-Gould's *Welsh Saints*, pp. 189, 190, and *Arch. Camb.*, 3rd Ser., vol. iii, p. 251).

<sup>3</sup> Rice Merrick, in his *Book of Glamorganshire Antiquities*, says: "Hee ("Sir R. de Granavilla) had also a brother named William and two nephewes, the one named Giraldus, the other named Theodoricus."

farm of Llanmihangel he names as the Grange of St. Michael in the same Bull.

It seems to me most probable that the young man of noble birth, Theodoricus, founded the hermitage afterwards known by his name. It is a name met with but once in all the charters of Neath and Margam, and on that occasion we find it as a witness to Sir Richard de Granavilla's pious dedication of his lands to the service of God. In this charter Sir Richard de Granavilla gives to God and to the Holy Trinity of Neeth (afterwards the dedication was to St. Mary) and to the monks serving God therein, according to the rules of Savigny, in France, for the health of the souls of his lord Robert (natural) son of the glorious King (Henry I) and of his wife Mabel, daughter and heir of Sir Robert Fitz-Hamon, and of his children, and for the health of the souls of himself, the grantor, and of his ancestors, and of his wife Constance, various lands at Neath and in Devonshire.

As I mention before, one of the witnesses to this deed was Theodoricus, the nephew of the grantor.

The family of Granavilla is traced to Rollo, first Scandinavian conqueror of Normandy. Sir Richard de Granavilla was a brother of Sir Robert Fitz-Hamon, Prince of Glamorgan, Count of Corbeil, Baron of Thorigny and Granville. Their father was Hamo Dentatus, sixth Earl of Corbeil. Thomas Fuller, D.D.,<sup>1</sup> states that Sir Richard Grenville, Knt., "lived and was richly landed at Bideford . . . This Sir Richard would have none make him rich . . . this knight . . . according to the devotion of those darker days, gave all to God, erecting and endowing a monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary at Neath for Cistercians. This having finished, he returned . . . to Bediford."

One writer<sup>2</sup> states, "Sir Richard . . . then took the Signe of the Crosse, and (as the superstitious manner

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Worthies of England." — Dr. Birch, *Neath Abbey*.

<sup>2</sup> Rice Merrick's *Book of Glamorganshire Antiquities*, A.D. 1578.

was in those days) went towards Jerusalem, in which journey hee dyed."

There is no direct evidence that the nephew founded the Hermitage of Theodoricus, but I think it exceedingly probable. There is but one Theodoricus mentioned in all the numerous MSS. of Margam and Neath Abbeys, and the Hermitage is named after a person called Theodoricus.

Theodoric may have been dedicated to God from his infancy by his parents, who regarded him as "given of God," and named him Theodoric accordingly. Or the young man, whatever his motives may have been, whether disappointed and tired of the world, or fired with zeal for his Master's service, or, it may be, in emulation of his uncle's pious example, determined to offer himself to God, and to found a hermitage in which he and others, weary of the world, might lead the contemplative life, and pass their span of time in prayer and thanksgiving, imitating the monks in this, but living a harder and more austere life. Lewis Morganwg, in his ode to Leision Thomas, last Abbot of Neath, says:—"The bells, the benedictions, and the peaceful songs of praise, proclaim the frequent thanksgivings of the White Monks."

The hermits sought more desolate places for their dwelling than did the monks; and renouncing all worldly things and loving poverty; living at a distance from the world, and united to God alone; and, leading the life described in the *Liber Landavensis*<sup>1</sup> as "vitam sanctam, vitam gloriosam, vitam castam et cum raro pane, tenui veste, macerate facie," carried out their ideal of service to God.

The family of the Fitz-Hamons and de Granavillas evidently had strong religious zeal. Sir Richard de Granavilla, as we have seen, founded Neath Abbey, and took "the Sign of the Crosse," and went to

<sup>1</sup> *Liber Landavensis*, p. 2.

Palestine like the Crusader of whom Spencer writes in his poem, the *Faerie Queene* :—

“Upon his breast a bloody cross he bore  
The dear remembrance of his dying Lord.  
For whose sweet sake that glorious badge he bore  
And dead as living Him adored ;  
Upon his shield the like was also scored  
For Sovereign hope which is His help he had.”

Sir Robert Fitz-Hamon, Sir Richard's brother, had four daughters : Theodoric's cousins, two of whom embraced the religious life ; and another, Mabilia or Mabel, with her husband, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, gave her dower lands to Margam Abbey.

There is, I think, every probability that Theodoric, sprung from a family given to good deeds, should desire to devote his life to God in his way ; and to that end founded the Hermitage, which was the forerunner in the monastic life in Margam of the great Abbey.

As I have remarked, we have reason to believe the hermits lived together as a conventual body. We have handed down to us the names of three, who were probably contemporaneous : Theodoric, Meiler, and Coch. The Hermitage of Theodoric may have been a considerable establishment, having several hermits dwelling in it.

In some way, the fact of the existence of the Hermitage, standing as it did within the lands of Theodoric's cousin Mabilia, Theodoric being its founder, may have given rise in Mabilia's mind to the idea of dedicating these lands, which she inherited, to a much larger retreat for men serving God in the contemplative life, and one more in accordance with the ideas of the day regarding the monastic life.

“The Cistercian Order, established at Neath in the early years of the twelfth century, had arisen in France at the close of the preceding century, by the institution of a few Benedictine monks of Molesme in Burgundy, who desired to correct the want of discipline among the Benedictines, and for this object retired to a secluded site in the diocese of Chalons, and there set

up, under the protection of the Duke of Burgundy, the Convent of Citeaux, or Cistercium, in A.D. 1098, where they lived under a new and stricter rule modelled on that of the Order they had quitted."<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, was a strict and austere Order, which Brother Meiler, the *hermit*, and the Brethren of Pendar had become members of, which appeared fitted to succeed the *hermits*, whose lives were still more severe and ascetic, but whose rule was not suited to the times and was passing away; and thus it probably appealed to the mind of Mabilia and her husband, and maybe the idea was fostered and encouraged by Theodoric himself.

To quote again from Dr. Birch, in his *Neath Abbey*, he says:—

"An eloquent writer<sup>2</sup> has declared that our monasteries (and he might have added the hermitages of an earlier period) were the refuge formerly for those who felt their incapacity for the struggle after virtuous happiness in the business of life. Their chief glory was, however, not so much in being in retreats—a mere practical end—but in the exalted idea which they gave to the laity, the general people, and the gay world. The spectacle of men, separated from vanity and devoted to heaven, tended to exalt and ennoble the human mind."

The echo, as it were, of the name Theodoricus, reaches us but faintly through the long centuries which have gone their way; but how vividly does it recall to us in Margam a beloved and venerated name? Whenever the name is mentioned, we have at once in our thoughts another young man of noble birth and ancient lineage, bearing the same name—a name which seemingly thanks God for a good life given to us—short this one, it is true, but one which has left a lasting monument.

Heir to the estate in which the Hermit dwelt in far-off times, and whose relatives once possessed it; descended from ancestors who, like those of Theodoricus, came from Normandy to this land under the banner of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Birch's *Neath Abbey*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> "Prince Metternich."—*Neath Abbey*, p. 29.



William the Conqueror, he, like Theodoricus, dedicated his life to his Lord and Master. "I only live for God's Glory," are his recorded words.<sup>1</sup>

"A young layman, who takes so active a part in a Church of extreme ritual as to walk himself in a Church service at the head of a guild or club of young men as their warden, with the emblem of the Cross attached to the collar of the Order, would seem to many to be a religious enthusiast, or even a fanatic. But for the aforesaid ordinary mind to understand that this young master of hounds and this young layman is one and the same person, would seem an incredible myth. Yet, so it was in the case of Theodore Talbot."<sup>2</sup>

Both of these young men were brave servants of our blessed Lord : the one, in the dim and far-distant days of seven-and-a-half centuries ago, gave up the pursuits and pleasures of the world, and bore the solitude of the lonely dwelling by the shore of the Severn Sea, to pass his time in praise and thanksgiving. The other, in our days, unmindful of the scoffing world, also gave himself to God's service.

When Elgar, the Hermit, was visited by Teacher Caradog, who wished to see if he were alive or dead, he, to his joy, found him alive.

"Caradog, descended from a noble family, with bended knees begged Elgar to give him an account of his life. Elgar told him that, through the bounty and goodness of God, holy spirits administered to him, and declared to him what is true and always promise what is right; describing to me the present life to be as a flower of the field, and the future as the odour of balm, comforting me that I might not faint in the way, who, having vanquished the enemy, should be rewarded with a heavenly crown."<sup>2</sup>

This was the reward both young men sought—each in his own way.

Miss Talbot has recently built a beautiful church, of Early English architecture, at Port Talbot, dedicated to St. Theodore, distant only two miles from the

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections of T. M. Talbot*, by Sir Baldwin Leighton, Bart.

<sup>2</sup> "Elgar, the Hermit."—*Liber Landavensis*, p. 281.

Hermitage. It was built in memory of Mr. Theodore Talbot, and his sister, Miss Olive Talbot.

By whom was the Hermitage occupied? By a solitary hermit—a recluse—as we to-day think the inmate of a hermitage was? I believe this hermitage was occupied by a conventual body of hermits. It seems probable that Meiler, *the hermit*, from the interest he takes in Margam Abbey, was at one time an inmate of the Hermitage before the dawn of the Abbey days. The Hermitage was in existence before the founding of the Abbey of Margam, as it is mentioned, as we have seen, in the foundation charter. The Abbey was founded in 1147, according to the *Annales de Margan*: “A.D. 1147, *Fundata est abbatia nostra quæ dicitur Margan.*”

As showing the difficulty of ascertaining at the present day what a hermitage really was, I mention here a grant to Margam Abbey, by William Camerarius,<sup>1</sup> of the Hermitage of St. Milburga (note the dedication to a saint is preserved, as it would have been, doubtless, in the case of Theodoricus), at Bristol, with its chapel, appurtenances and liberties, meadow, pastures, waters, cultures and easements; the Abbey providing a religious—*i.e.*, regular or monastic—chaplain, unless the grantor excuses the provision of the same. This hermitage was clearly not the small cell of a recluse, and the provision of a religious chaplain would seem to indicate that the hermits were lay brethren similar to the Cistercian *conversi*.

The brethren of Theodoric's Hermitage doubtless farmed the adjacent land, and perhaps fished; and, like the monks of St. Anthony in Cornwall, who acted as pilots to ships passing to Falmouth, may have served as pilots for the Abbey ships,<sup>2</sup> and others coming into the harbour of the Avan.

<sup>1</sup> Or Chamberlain.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Clark, in the *Land of Morgan*, records an amnesty in which the men of Bristol, among other matters, were to give up the Abbot of Margam's ship to the cellarer of that house. Giraldus Cambrensis

The gift which Griffin ab Ivor, Lord of Seinghennydd,<sup>1</sup> made to the Abbey of Margam, clearly shows that a hermitage stood very much on the same footing as an abbey (see B on Map, Fig. 1). In one of the earliest of Margam Abbey deeds, this gift is mentioned :—

“William, Earl of Gloucester, son of Robert of Caen, notifies to his steward, barons, and all his men—French, English, and Welsh—that he has confirmed the gift which Griffin ab Ivor has made to the Abbey of Margam, by Brother Meiler, Awenet, for making a *hermitage or abbey*, if possible, viz., upon the water of Taf, all the land called Stratvaga,<sup>2</sup> and all Brenkeiru (Bryn-cyriawg), and from Berkehu-taf (Bargoed Taff) to Bargau Remni (Bargoed Rumney), and all Karpdawardmenet (? Cae'r-bedw-ar-y-mynydd), and all Maislette, and from Mauhanishead (? Maes-ynys) to Taf and fisheries in Taf, and all the land of St. Gladus (Capel Gwladus district), with its pastures, as far as Brohru-caru (Vochrhiw); and on the other side of St. Gladus, as far as Hen-glau (Hen-glawdd), as far as the water called Kidliha (Nant Cylla), and all the lands of Masmawan (Maes-mafon).”

It seems to me that all these possessions indicate that if a hermitage were established on the lands, it would be an extensive one, and inhabited by a conventual body of hermits.

In the far-off days when the Hermitage is first mentioned to us in the charter founding the ancient Abbey of Margam, its situation must have been in winter desolate and weird in the extreme; isolated, and difficult of access, and in stormy winter days the roar of the tide on either side and the hoarse cry of the sea birds made it a truly fitting spot for a dwelling for persons who wished to live far from their fellows, and to be alone with Nature and with their Maker. Twice

tells us that in the twelfth century the Monks of Margam, when the county was suffering from a scarcity of food, sent a ship to Bristol for corn; but the winds were contrary and the ship was delayed, when, lo! a field of corn belonging to the Abbey suddenly ripened a month or more before its time.

<sup>1</sup> He married Mabel, daughter of Earl Robert of Caen.

<sup>2</sup> ? Ystrad Vargoed.

a day at high tide—the Hermitage, standing near the head of a long narrow strip of land, having the sea on one side, and on the other an estuary, up which the tide flowed for two miles to two miles and three-quarters, according to the height of the tide—would almost appear as if it stood on an island. To reach the Hermitage from where Taibach now stands, a mile and a-half to the north, the traveller would have to go nearly as far as Morfa Bach, and then back along the narrow strip of land a total distance of six and a-half miles, the tide being full in; and, even at low tide, the muddy pills and creeks in the estuary would probably prevent a short cut being made from the main land.

In the *Beaufort Progress*, A.D. 1684, mention is made of this strip of land, and gives us a picture of it at high tide and in summer :—

“Margham is a very noble seat . . . Its scituation is among excellent springs . . . at the foot of prodigious high hilles of Woods, shelter for ye Deer, about a mile distant from an arm of the sea, parting this shore and the County of Cornwall, below which, and washed almost round with the salt water, is a Marsh, whereto the Deer (ye tide being low) resort much by swimming, and thrive to such an extraordinary weight and fatness as I never saw the like . . .”

The tide is now shut out by sea walls.

Several charters mention the Hermitage of Theodoricus in describing the boundaries of the Abbey lands. In a Bull of Pope Urban III, directed to the Abbot and Brethren of Margam Abbey, in response to their request, taking them under the protection of St. Peter and the Pope, and confirming the several grants made to them, we find the Hermitage at this date (November 18th, 1186) had become the Grange of Theodoricus' Hermitage; so that, thirty-nine years after the founding of the Abbey, the Hermitage had given way to the farm. The latest charter mentioning the Hermitage is one by Richard, Earl of Gloucester, between A.D. 1246 and A.D. 1249. After this date, no further mention is found of it; and, judging from a

detailed account of the Abbey Granges which the Abbot drew up in A.D. 1326 for the Abbot of Clairvaux, in obedience to the mandates of the Apostolic See, and of Clairvaux, followed by complaints of losses caused by mortality, wars, nearness to the high road, and that no small part of the land adjacent to the shore is subject to inundation of sand, I conclude that the Hermitage was overwhelmed by sand-storms, and lost to human ken from about A.D. 1300 to A.D. 1898, a period of five hundred and ninety-eight years. A Bull of Pope Urban VI, addressed to the Bishop of Llandaff, sanctions the appropriation of the patronage of the Church of Aberavon (Aven) by the Abbey, because, among other things, the Abbey lands and possessions adjacent to the sea shore had become unfruitful, owing to inroads of the sea (probably sand is meant); dated July 17th, A.D. 1383. In the Patent Rolls of the eighth year of King Richard II, October 28th 1384, it is set forth that the Abbot had delivered a petition showing how Edward le Despencer, out of consideration for the losses which the sand-storms had inflicted on the Abbey, had bestowed on it the advowson of Aberavon Church. Pope Urban VI, by a deed, dated at Naples, April 29th, 1384, allowed the Abbey to appropriate the Church of Penllyn for the same cause.

After seeing the plan of so much of the Grange of the Hermitage as I was able to unearth, Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite wrote to me, on February 24th, 1902 :—

“The building you have unearthed seems to be an interesting one; and, so far as I can judge from the drawings, it may be the first half of the fourteenth century. It is not a hermitage in the usual sense of the word, but it seems to have been a dwelling-house of some sort, and may have belonged to a grange, or a cell of the smaller sort.”

In writing to Mr. Micklethwaite, I should have called the building the Grange of Theodoric's Hermitage, as it is termed in the Papal Bull. I am inclined—if it is not presumptuous in me after the above opinion—to place the date as 1227, solely for this reason : we find from

the *Annales de Margan* that, in 1227 A.D. the Welsh cleared the Grange of Theodore, burned several horses and great flocks of sheep; and it seems probable from this that the buildings were also destroyed, to be rebuilt at that time, or perhaps somewhat later.

It is interesting to discuss the question of the overwhelming of the building by the sand-storms. Were they covered slowly, or at once? When I discovered the ruins, I was puzzled to know what part we were in, and I later found we were in the upper story. Dividing two of the rooms, I found a clay partition 3 ins. thick, plastered with mortar on each side, still standing, supported by the sand, although the floor had disappeared. This seems to me to prove that the sand enveloped the building quickly; otherwise, if the sand took a considerable time to reach the upper story, this fragile partition would have crumbled and fallen by the action of the wind and rain, to which it would soon be exposed after the buildings were abandoned.

It is also interesting to note here, on this subject, as confirming in some degree the date I have assigned to the overwhelming by sand of the Hermitage, the tradition which is mentioned in Davies's *West Gower*, Pt. iv. In a grant, dated June, A.D. 1317, by Sir William de Breos, Lord of the seignior of Gower, to his huntsman, William, and Joan his wife, he gives liberty to them to take hares and rabbits, foxes, and other animals, in the sand-burrows of Penard. Mr. Davies remarks on this:—

“Here, then, we have indisputable evidence, that in 1317 A.D., Penard burrows existed as a fact. The tradition is, that it was formed by a terrible storm all in one night, and . . . the conclusion is almost irresistible that both these burrows<sup>1</sup> were formed at the same time, and the church and village of Stedworlango were overwhelmed when the sand-storm occurred, and consequently the be-sanding of these two churches (Penard and Penmaen) must have taken place previous to A.D. 1317.”

<sup>1</sup> The other burrows being Penmaen.

Seeing the short distance between the Hermitage and Pennard (only thirteen miles), it seems probable that the same terrible storm covered up the Hermitage.

The approximate date of A.D. 1300 for the be-sanding of the Hermitage is also, to some extent, incidentally corroborated by a Margam Abbey deed. St. James's Church, at Kenfig, in the neighbourhood of the Hermitage, was covered by sand, and in this deed we find a new church mentioned. It is a demise, by Fr. Thomas, Abbot of Margam, to John le Younge, burgess of Kenfig for his life, of land formerly belonging to the Office of the Master of the Works of the New Church.

Dated at the Monastery of Margam, Sunday before St. James's Day, July 25th, A.D. 1307.

This seems to point to the recent erection of the new church, some time prior to A.D. 1307. I am not certain, however, that the new church referred to may not be the Early English part of Margam Abbey church.

In the deed of Pope Urban VI, dated at Naples, May 29th, 1384, before referred to, one of the clauses refers to the heavy debts of the Abbey, which made it impossible for it to repair its buildings, now dilapidated by the "*Horrida ventorum intemperies*," dreadful and unseasonable gales, which had thrown down or rendered insecure the greater part of them. Here we have evidence of dreadful gales actually overthrowing the Abbey buildings at the same time as the inundations of the sea are mentioned as having occurred. It certainly seems that at that time (probably about 1300), a fearful and unusual storm must have raged—in fact, a catastrophe.

#### PENDAR.

In the Abbey deeds, in a late twelfth-century charter, is a grant by Philip, son of Griffin, and Morgan, his son, and his wife, to the Cistercian Order and to Margam Abbey, by the hands of Brother Meiler of certain lands, apparently near Cymmer, and adjacent



to the River Taf,<sup>1</sup> and to Brother Meiler and the house of Pendar all the pasturage in his land except cultivated lands and meadows. Griffith, or Griffin, ab Ivor was the Lord of Seinghennydd.

Another charter, by which William, Earl of Gloucester, confirms a gift which Griffin ab Ivor made to the Abbey of Margam by the hand of Brother Meiler Awenet, of lands east of the Taf, in the neighbourhood of Ystradmynach, Stratvaga, and of Capel Gwladus, for building there a hermitage or an abbey.

In another charter<sup>2</sup> is recorded a grant of land by Gunilda, wife of Geoffrey Sturmi (after whom Stormy, Pyle, is named) to Margam Abbey. One of the witnesses is Brother Meiler *the hermit*.

And yet another charter<sup>3</sup> is also witnessed by Brother Meiler *the hermit*: it is a grant of land by Chenewthur and his brothers Blethin, William, Chenwrec, and Riderec, in perpetual alms to the Abbey of Margam; this land is situated near Llangewydd.

It is strange that we find writers who say that Margam was called at one time Pendar. Cliffe, in his *Book of South Wales*, 1848, says: "Margam once called Pen-dar," and Mr. Clark, describing a deed from the *Penrice MSS.*, A.D. 1155, in his *Cartæ*, calls it a "Grant by Caradoc Uerbeis to Brother Meiler and the Brethren of Pendar, otherwise Margam." David Morgan, in his *Hanes Morganwg*, p. 392, says: "Historians say the original name of Margam was Pendar, on account of the number of oaks growing there, then as now." However the tradition arose that Margam was once called Pendar, it is dispelled by the words of the charter before mentioned, by which Philip, son of Griffin, and Morgan his son, gave to Margam Abbey certain lands near Cymmer and the Taf, and also give to Brother Meiler and the house of Pendar the pasturage in his, Philip's, lands. This certainly shows that Margam and Pendar were

<sup>1</sup> *Talbot MSS.*, 10, C. D. IV (Clark's).

<sup>2</sup> *T.*, 11; MCCCCVII (Clark's).

<sup>3</sup> *Harley Charter* 75B.

existing contemporaneously. It seems clear, however, that Brother Meiler was in some way closely connected with Margam Abbey (probably for the reason I give on page 139), and I had thought that I might have been able to locate Pendar as being at any rate in Margam, and possibly as being the site of the Hermitage of Theodoricus, seeing that Brother Meiler is called in two deeds "the hermit," and that a Brother Meiler was evidently the ruler of the house of Pendar.

I have reluctantly, however, been forced to abandon this idea and to seek for Pendar elsewhere; and, further on, I give my reasons for the location I give to it. I may be wrong; nevertheless, one of the objects of these notes is that it may induce others to investigate the subject.

It is a curious but puzzling fact that there appear to have been two Brother Meilers, distinguished fortunately for us by the description added to each: one, Brother Meiler *the hermit*, the other Brother Meiler *Awenet* (*Awenydd*, as I think).

We find from Giraldus Cambrensis that in his time there was a notable man living in the neighbourhood of the City of the Legions, or Caerleon, a certain man of Wales called Mailer, a diviner of the future and having knowledge of secret things. This I believe is the Meiler *Awenydd*,<sup>1</sup> or, as the Norman scribe writes it in the deed of Griffin ab Ivor, as near phonetically as he is able to, *Awenet*: the lands given by the hand of Meiler *Awenydd* being those of the Lord of Seinghennydd, are near the abode of Meiler, Caerleon. I think this is the only occasion in which Meiler *Awenydd* occurs, and nothing seems to have come of the project of forming a hermitage or abbey.

<sup>1</sup> "Awenydd," a poet, a genius, one inspired. "Notandum autem quod in his urbis Legionum partibus fuit diebus nostris vir quidam Cambrensis, cui nomen Mailerus, futurum pariter et occultorum scientiam habens." Giraldus Cambrensis, quoted by Leland, who adds: "Mira sunt immo incredibilia refert de hoc Meilero" (Hearne's *Leland's Collectanea*).

That Griffin, son of Ivor, Lord of Seinghennydd, was a benefactor of Margam Abbey, is clear; the Abbey Roll represents a grant by him to the Abbey of 100 acres of arable, 12 of meadow, and common of pasture land at Lecwithe, the fisheries of Helei (Ely river), and common of pasture of Seinhei (Seinghennydd), etc. His body, and that of his mother Nesta, to be buried at Margam.

Having no direct evidence as to the site of Pendar much must be left to conjecture. I have no doubt it is not in Margam, and certainly not the site of the Hermitage; but I am inclined to think that Brother Meiler *the hermit* was its ruler, and not Meiler *Awenydd*. I have no doubt it was situated in or near the land of the Lord of Seinghennydd, with whom Meiler, the ruler of Pendar, seems to have had much influence.

I have come to the conclusion that Pendar is Cefn Pennar. We have several examples of a letter being dropped in Welsh place-names—perhaps for the sake of euphony: thus, Cefn Pennar is easier for colloquial use than Cefn Pendar—so, probably, Pendar became Pennar. Thus Pengarth becomes Penarth, and in Gower Penard.

Professor Rhys gives an example in his *Lectures on Welsh Philology*, p. 361, in Llanol, the name of a farm in Anglesey, which, he says, is probably the name of an extinct church or chapel, and that it may be supposed to stand for Llanfol or Llanbol. Here the “f” or “b” is dropped, and the word becomes Llanol. The neighbouring house is Pembro. The accent in each—Pendar, Pennar, Penarth, Llanol, is on the last syllable. I am helped to this conclusion by the situation of the land given to Brother Meiler and the Brethren of Pendar<sup>1</sup> by Caradoc Uerbeis. I was able, when Dr. Birch wrote asking me if I knew its situation, to locate it as being in Llanwonno parish, and between the three streams, the Ffrwd, the Clydach

<sup>1</sup> Talbot MSS. No. 54.

(Ynis-y-bwl district), and Llysant, which joins the Clydach at Felin Gelly. These lands are just two miles south of Cwm Pennar, and it is probable that the lands belonging to Pendar joined them (see Plan, Fig. 1, lands marked A). On this land, some 1,200 to 1,500 acres, we find on the Ordnance Map, north of the Ffrwd, the ruins marked "Mynachdy," on supposed site of monastery (see 6-in. Ordnance Survey Sheet, XIX and XXVIII); and Capel Fynachlog is also marked and near by Glyn Mynachesau; also there is Gelli Fynaches. Dr. Birch, in his *History of Margam Abbey*, places the date of this deed as certainly anterior to A.D. 1147, which, being the date of the foundation of Margam Abbey, shows that the house of Pendar was founded first.

The ruins of a monastery on lands given to the Brethren of Pendâr suggest either the removal from Pendâr or Pennar to the new site, or the establishment there of a branch house; these lands being so near Cefn or Cwm Pennar strongly suggest to me that Pendâr and Pennar are one and the same place.

The grant is by Caradoc Uerbeis, in perpetual alms to God and St. Mary, and to the Cistercian Order and Brother Meiler and the Brethren of Pendâr, of all his land between the three waters, Frutsanant, Cleudac, and Nantclokenig, in wood and plain, which wood is called Hlowenroperdeit, with concession of Margam, Caduwalan, and Meriedoc, sons of Caradoc, in whose fee the land stood, and of the grantor's brothers, Joaf, Grunu, and Meuric, his son, and his wife Gwladys, for 20 *sh.* (see A on Map, Fig. 1).

We have yet another deed suggesting the site of Pendar as being Cwm Pennar, or Cefn Pennar. This is the grant by Philip, son of Griffin, referred to on page 144. It gives to Margam Abbey by the hands of Brother Meiler of all the land of Eniseleueu,<sup>1</sup> viz., from Pistilcoleu (Pistyll-goleu on the Clydach) to Chammaru (Cymmer), and as the road lies from Cham-

<sup>1</sup> Probably Ynys-olen.

maru to Killecheireh,<sup>1</sup> over the nearest hill next Luhmeneh,<sup>2</sup> stretching as far as the road leading to Frutreulin,<sup>3</sup> and from Frutreulin to Pistilcoleu and on to the river Taf; and to Brother Meiler and the house of Pendar, all the pasturage in his land except cultivated lands and meadows, for 2 *sh.*, and reception of the grantor into the fraternity of Margam. The pasturages thus granted are all in the vicinity of Cefn Pennar, convenient for the grazing of the cattle of the house, and, therefore, to some extent it points to the site of Pendar being Cefn Pennar (see c on Map, Fig. 1).

With reference to the question of hermits and their rule of life, we find in a Harley Charter, dated A.D. 1205 (*Talbot MSS.*, 288-10), recorded the confirmation to Margam Abbey by Morgan, the son of Caradoc, of a meadow which had belonged to the Hermit Coh, or Goch, in the Marsh of Avene. This gives us the name of another hermit, of probably the time of, and living perhaps with Meiler the hermit, at Theodoricus' Hermitage, and possessing land near by. I mention this as somewhat strengthening my idea of the hermits living as a conventual body.

I have said the sand dunes are lonely; the vast waste of sand is lonely at all times, but more especially so when the wind soughs through the rushes,<sup>4</sup> as if complaining because they hinder it from carrying the sand with it for company on its way. After a storm you see traced on the smooth sand perfect semi-circles, sometimes complete circles; these are made by the points of the rushes, bent and circled around by the wind, as if to mark their protest at the rough treatment. In winter the rushes, for very dulness, put on their gray garb, reserving the green for the promise of spring.

But it is at night, when the sad silent moon lights up the dunes and tints them cold and silvery, that they seem the more desolate, and the moan of the restless tide which hovers over the waste adds to the feeling of solitude which comes over you. In summer time the dunes have some beauty. Now and again

<sup>1</sup> (?) Cil-y-ceirw.

<sup>2</sup> (?) Lli-y-mynydd.

<sup>3</sup> Ffrwd-rhiw-velen.

<sup>4</sup> Properly sea sedge (*Ammophila arundinacea*)

you come across a bright orange-red flower<sup>1</sup> in some of the hollows, contrasting pleasingly with the greenish-gray of the rushes. In some parts, too, on the landward margin of the dunes, are tiny wild dwarf-roses (Burnet or Scotch-rose, *Rosa spinosissima*), with pale-pink blossoms, which scatter their fragrance around, and nestle close to the sand for fear of the winds; small wild pansies (*Viola tricolor*) keep them company. Mingling with them is found the delicious dewberry (*Rubus caesius*). The sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) is very abundant on the sands.

As you approach the beach, and the sun shines brightly, occasional glimpses are had of the bright blue of sea between the golden-coloured hills, and you are glad at a beautiful bit of scenery with such fine difference of colour. These peeps of the sea tell you the sands are not limitless—an idea which comes over you as you pass hillock after hillock of the same yellow sand, with tufts of rushes which never vary in colour—and that you are not shut out entirely from the world of life and stir.

You are wrong in thinking there is no life in such a dreary waste. Sit quietly on a hillock, and soon a rabbit will come and look out from a hole high up in the face of a steep sloping bank of sand in front of you; if you move you just catch sight of the little white "scut," as bunny retreats to warn his family. If you sit on, your approach is forgotten—you had not come along without bunny scouts seeing you—and you will presently see rabbits come from their holes in all directions. Some scamper aimlessly off, others sit up for very joy of living, and for delight in having such a paradise for their own, with rich feeding-ground close at hand in the fields. But, if it happens to be windy, and you feel the driven sand sting you sharply in the face, as it will then, never a rabbit will you see; he hears the roar of the wind outside his burrow, and lies close, perhaps by reason of thinking that in such a din his foe—man, stoat, or weasel—may steal a march on him. Hares speed past you, and the whirr of the pheasant is not absent. You may be so fortunate as to see a Shellduck<sup>2</sup> bringing her brood out of a deserted rabbit-hole, their home; she is taking the ducklings for a bathe and a swim in the sea. Watch them waddle across the beach, and you will soon see the little family, with the mother, tossing about in the tumbling waters. Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, in *Shooting*, writes of the Shellduck (Shellduck or Shelldrake): "We have seen a Shellduck, when the tide was low, unable to lead her brood to the

<sup>1</sup> One of the Iris species; it has sharp-edged and sword-like leaves. It may be *Iris fetidissima*, although the blossom is not of the usual colour.

<sup>2</sup> *Tadorna cornuta*.

sea, carry them on her back, each duckling holding on by a feather, having, while she lay down, climbed up and ensconced themselves with the greatest ease."

You will often startle a partridge with her little brood; and very pretty they are as they scurry off to hide in the rushes.

The solemn white owl loves the dunes, and a species of hawk hovers generally on the sea-side fringe of the dunes. I once had two from the dunes, and kept them for years: they became quite tame. The buzzard likes the dunes when small rabbits are about.

Of course, the green plover, the "peewit" is there, flying in circles over your head with plaintive cry, at times approaching quite close—so close that you hear the fan-like hum of the wings, and so like a fan that the French name the bird "Vanneau." Here and there you come across a flat stone, with a little heap of broken shells by it. It is one of the slaughter-stones on which blackbird or thrush has cracked the shells of snails to get at the succulent food inside.

In the winter, when the sun is bright—as it is at times even in this land—and there is a bite of frost in the air, a walk among the dunes is pleasant; but you have to walk with half-closed eyes, the sand, with the rime on it, glistens and dazzles so. At this time you hear the "honck-honck" of the grey geese, chiefly the "white-fronted,"<sup>1</sup> and, I think, the "greyleg,"<sup>2</sup> which visit us from icy northern lands, as they fly high in the air overhead in their well-known wedge-like flight. I wish I could tell of all the birds we find there, but I do not know them by name.

The beach, too, has somewhat of sadness about it, for up in the sand-hills, at its margin, partly embedded in the sand, are piled the wreckage of days gone by; and as you walk along it you come across spars or parts of hulls that tell of recent wrecks and human suffering. If you are laggard, and evening still finds you there, the sea looks black and the sand hills assume weird shapes; then it becomes uncanny, and you are glad to hasten your steps homeward; the only sound of life is a quick rustling of the rushes, now and again as a rabbit starts off frightened at your footsteps.

Such, then, is the scene amid which the ruins of the ancient Grange have remained so long hidden. The ruins, as you look upon them, add in your thoughts to the desolateness of the place. You wonder what catastrophe could have piled up mountains of sand over and around them, and driven the brethren back to the Abbey home. The catastrophe happened so long

<sup>1</sup> *Anser albifrons.*

<sup>2</sup> *Anser cinereus.*



ago, that it is difficult to realise that six hundred years well-nigh had passed since faces had looked out from those dormer windows, and since people had passed in and out of the dwelling, and went up the same steps we can go up to-day.

The dwellers there thought, when the fierce Welshmen from the hills came and destroyed their cattle, that worse could not befall them. But worse still was to come: the blinding, irresistible sand enemy came like an avalanche, to drive them away, and to hide for so long and so completely their home, that even the name of the Grange was no more to be seen in the Abbey Charters as of old; and the monks wondered, as they wandered over the desolate waste, where its position had been.

It is long since the brethren, hearing cries from the shipwrecked, used to hasten to the rescue; and it is long since the cry for help came wailing to the Grange from Susannah and her companions in their ill-fated voyage. No brethren hastened to their help while they battled for life in the furious surf, for even before this they had gone, driven away by a ruthless enemy, and the Grange lay hidden under its winding-sheet of sand, and the cries were unheeded.

Close upon six hundred years have passed since then, and yet we know the names of those who perished. They were Philip Filias, Thomas de Wallare, John le Rede, John de Chorchehey, Thomas de Penmark, Henry le Glovare, and a girl named Susannah.

The Abbot and Lord William La Zousche, Lord of Glamorgan, fought over the wreck, and the case was tried in the County Court, at Cardiff, on January 18th, 1333. The Abbot won, for the jury found that he had the right of wreck, "a tempore quo non extat memoria."

The great Abbot, probably John de Cantelo, became the owner of the boat, valued at 40s., three bales of wool, 60s., a small box, and a cask worth 8s.<sup>1</sup> He was glad of even this windfall, so much had the sand impoverished him.

The rush which grows on the sand is the *arundo arenaria*;<sup>2</sup> planting it is the only means of stopping the drifting of the sand. It grows freely, throwing out in all directions long underground stems or rhizomes, which bind and hold fast the hillocks, which would otherwise only too gladly accompany the wild winds from the sea.

For some reason, the planting of this rush was abandoned for years, and, in consequence, hundreds of acres of land were

<sup>1</sup> To arrive at the value of these sums to-day we should multiply them by ten or fifteen.

<sup>2</sup> Linnaeus. Now called *Ammophila arundinacea*.

covered by sand. The late Mr. Talbot tried hedges of brushwood in lines along the sands; but the sand made light of them, and, like boys who wishing to reach their prey over a wall, cause some to bend against it, as in leap-frog, then others to mount and over, piled itself against the obstruction, and soon enabled the later-coming sand to pass over and on in its career of destruction. Planting was afterwards resumed and the sands anchored.

I here offer my grateful thanks to Miss Talbot for her assistance in enabling me to uncover the ruins, and to Dr. de Gray Birch for allowing me to draw so freely as I have from his Histories of Margam and Neath Abbey; and I also beg to thank Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite for his valuable information, and Mr. Edward Roberts, Swansea, for his help in elucidating the meaning of place-names—in this he is a master.

These fragmentary notes are compiled in the hope that they may lead to the discovery of the actual site of Pendar. I had hoped to keep Pendar for Margam, but so far I have been unsuccessful.

I head these notes as First Part, hoping I may some day be able to give Part Two.

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## THE GOLDEN GROVE BOOK OF PEDIGREES.

BY EDWARD OWEN, ESQ.

CONSIDERABLE attention has recently been directed to what is perhaps the best known collection of Welsh pedigrees still remaining in manuscript, the *Golden Grove Book* (in four volumes), now the property of the earl of Cawdor; and there appears to be fair hope of settling some of the questions to which it has given rise—questions relating to its authorship and its authority.

In the number of our Journal for October, 1898 (5th Ser., vol. xv, p. 377), Mr. Stepney-Gulston drew attention to "this extremely interesting manuscript," gave a brief account of its arrangement, of its supposed compiler, of its past possessors and present owners; and suggested "that if any enterprising person, society, or firm of publishers, obtaining permission, could see their way to the reproduction of the said *Golden Grove Book* in a printed form, it would undoubtedly prove of inestimable value to all those interested in the genealogical history of Wales."

In the next volume but one of our Journal (5th Ser., vol. xvii, p. 277, October, 1900), in the course of an article under the somewhat misleading title, "Welsh Records," Mr. J. Pym Yeatman dealt with the authorship of the *Golden Grove Book*; and, whatever may be thought of that gentleman's argument, or of his conclusions, it must be admitted that his was the first real attempt to grapple with the important and fundamental questions of its source, date, and authorship.

"Take," says Mr. Yeatman (p. 279), "the *Golden Grove Book*, almost the latest of the great [Welsh pedigree] authorities; that is obviously drawn from many sources, and a list is given to

distinguish some of them (since they are only quoted in the body of the book by initials), but this list curiously omits the two leading lights which inspired it, William Lewis and David Edwards, whose notes are *passim*; both of them are constantly referred to, and generally by name, so that it was unnecessary to mention them amongst the list of the initialed. It is well known to Welshmen that William Lewis, of Llwynderw, 'copied Edwards' works and arranged them on a new method, setting the one under the different chieftains, and the others together in a separate volume.' This is stated by Edward Prothero, junior, under date August 12th, 1842, in a series of letters, to be found with the volumes now in the Bodleian Library, under Additional C, 177. Now this is precisely the arrangement of the *Golden Grove Book*, so that it is obvious that the writer, as he acknowledges, had access to Edwards, though possibly through his copyist Lewis."

Mr. Yeatman next traces the fortunes of the genealogical manuscripts of David Edwards, of Rhyd-y-gors, satisfactorily proving that several of the volumes now in the Heralds' College, called the Prothero MSS. (because they were purchased from Mr. Edward Prothero), and certain others in the Bodleian at Oxford, catalogued as Additional C 177-179, at one time constituted one complete and connected collection, which had been formed by Mr. Edwards, of Rhyd-y-gors, in the county of Carmarthen, who towards the end of the seventeenth century had acted as deputy to one of the Officers of Arms. Mr. Yeatman, after exposing the ignorance of the Heralds' College authorities of the *Golden Grove Book*, as well as of their own volumes, observes :—

"A visit to the Bodleian resulted in finding Edwards' five<sup>1</sup> volumes there, with Prothero's

<sup>1</sup> *Quære* three.

account of his sale of the others to Heralds' College. That Prothero's not very positive belief that the whole of the volumes in both collections were the work of David Edwards, was accurate, has been proved by the aid of photography, the University authorities (unlike some Welsh owners of MSS.) having very generously permitted photographs to be made of parts of these books, which prove that they formed part of the collection at Heralds' College, and were in the same handwriting."

Mr. Yeatman then proceeds to deal with the connection, which he had already shown to exist, between David Edwards's volumes and the *Golden Grove Book*. Prothero (according to Mr. Yeatman's rather confused account) seems to have thought Edwards's volumes to have been "only rough copies of some better books," and to have considered the *Golden Grove Book* to be the, or "some" of the, "better books." Mr. Yeatman's conclusion is different. He adduces "ample evidence to show a common origin between the *Golden Grove Book* and David Edwards; or, rather, that Edwards was the groundwork of the other, and that he made his book up from the older authorities, probably presented to him through William Lewis."

I now leave Mr. Yeatman for a brief space, in order to draw attention to the latest pronouncement upon the *Golden Grove Book*, contained in an article in *The Ancestor* (No. 4, January 1903), upon "The Value of Welsh Pedigrees," by Mr. H. J. T. Wood. The object of this writer is thus stated in his own words:—"At first sight it is undoubtedly an astounding proposition that an eighteenth-century MS. such as the *Golden Grove*, should be a good authority for eleventh- and twelfth-century pedigrees; yet that there are good *prima facie* reasons for such being the case, I hope to show in the present article." How far Mr. Wood has succeeded in demonstrating his highly hazardous

proposition, I will not stay at this moment to inquire.<sup>1</sup> What he has to say concerning the *Golden Grove Book*, is as follows:—

“This is the latest and most accessible of the general collections of Welsh pedigrees;<sup>2</sup> it appears to have been compiled in the years 1752-65, and contains some later additions, chiefly in the hand-writing of Theophilus Jones, who used it for his *History of Breconshire*, published in 1805, and states in effect that it is the book of the Arwyddfeirdd (Chief Bard),<sup>3</sup> taken by command of the Earl of Carberry.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Pym Yeatman names Evan Evans as the compiler.<sup>5</sup> It is certainly not by Hugh Thomas, as stated by Mr. Horwood,<sup>6</sup> for

<sup>1</sup> As indicating Mr. Wood's competence for his task, and knowledge of Welsh historical authorities, I quote the following remark: “It is possible that the arguments advanced with respect to the later ones [*i.e.*, to Welsh pedigrees of later date than the ‘passing’ of the laws of Howell Dda] are applicable to them [*i.e.*, those earlier than that period], at all events for some time previous to this date [A.D. 942]; since the laws of Howell Dda are known to have been founded on those of Dyfnwal Moelmud, who probably flourished about A.D. 400, though there was another chieftain of the same name, who is said to have lived about eight hundred years earlier.” And Mr. Wood calmly proceeds to quote as from documents “of an early date and considerable authority,” the late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century forgeries, known as the Moelmutian Triads. As for two Dyfnwal Moelmuds, one living B.C. 400, the other A.D. 400, even if we admit the existence of one, there is not the slightest justification for Mr. Wood's adoption of the bipartient methods of Solomon.

<sup>2</sup> It is, of course, not more accessible than any of the British Museum collections.

<sup>3</sup> This shows that knowledge of Welsh, in which language all the early collections of our pedigrees are written (*vide* Dr. Gwenogvryn Evans's *Catalogue of the Peniarth Library*), is not amongst the qualifications of Mr. Wood for estimating “the Value of Welsh Pedigrees.”

<sup>4</sup> (*Note by Mr. Wood*). Vol. ii, p. 140, and *cp.* p. 139 with the *Golden Grove*, G. 1030.

<sup>5</sup> (*Note by Mr. Wood*). *Notes and Queries*, Ser. 9, v. 359. [Mr. Wood is evidently ignorant of Mr. Yeatman's later and more elaborate article in this Journal.]

<sup>6</sup> (*Note by Mr. Wood*). *Second Report of the Historical MSS. Commission*, Appendix, p. 31.

he died in 1720; but it is possible that some of his MSS. are now bound up with it.<sup>1</sup> On going through the pedigrees, it will be seen that certain dates in the seventeenth century constantly occur. In the case of Breconshire these are 1644 and 1686, the dates at which the collections of pedigrees of Richard Williams, of Llywel, sometimes known as Dick Howell Williams, and David Edwards, of Rhyd y gors, are known to have been made,<sup>2</sup> so that it would seem that the immediate source of the *Golden Grove* was, as regards Breconshire, the work of these two genealogists. A similar state of affairs is found in regard to the other counties,<sup>3</sup> the conclusions being that the *Golden Grove* is a copy and continuation of pedigrees drawn up in the seventeenth century. Going further back, references will be found to various other pedigree writers under their initials (a list of thirty has been inserted by Jones at the beginning of the first volume);<sup>4</sup> so that it would appear that the book, in its present form, contains a continuous series of additions made to existing pedigrees, each addition being within the reasonable knowledge of its author, and is not a collection of pedigrees made at a late date, and therefore of little value."

Mr. Wood does not carry us much further than Mr. Yeatman had already taken us, and we will accordingly return to the latter gentleman.

<sup>1</sup> This is not the case.

<sup>2</sup> It would be interesting to know Mr. Wood's authority for this statement. The dates are, no doubt, approximately, if not actually, correct; but it would be well to substantiate the point.

<sup>3</sup> Not of North Wales. The families of Gwynedd are summed up very briefly, and the careless manner in which this part has been written betokens either a summary closure of the scribe's labours, or lack of interest on the part of the writer he was copying from in families of whom he knew nothing.

<sup>4</sup> This list of "authorities" is not in the hand of Theophilus Jones, but in that of the individual whose initials "E. E." are at the foot of the same folio.



Nowhere in his paper does Mr. Yeatman give the date at which William Lewis (or "Lewes," which was the spelling he most frequently affected) flourished. Of David Edwards, he says that he was appointed deputy to Sir Henry St. George, Clarencieux, on August 1st, 1684, "and it was probably not his first appointment; he appears to have ceased to act in 1686, the later pedigrees [in his volumes in the Heralds' College and Bodleian] not being his work." But it is clear that for present purposes Mr. William Lewes is the more important personage, and upon him, therefore, we will concentrate our attention. Now, scattered amongst the collections of Hugh Thomas, the Breconshire herald and antiquary, in the British Museum, are several letters of William Lewes, written to his friend and fellow genealogist, Hugh Thomas, then living in London. The volume, entitled *Harleian* 6831, is thus described in the Museum Catalogue: "A large folio containing Mr. Hugh Thomas's Genealogical History of the Ancient Nobility and Gentry of Wales, and of several families descended thence now living in England;" and this is followed by another title, which has nothing to do with the volume to which it is presumed to refer. Of any attempt to set forth its actual contents there has hitherto been none, though it has been dipped into by many historical workers and pedigree-hunters. In the course of compiling *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts relating to Wales in the British Museum* for the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, I have just finished an exhaustive calendar of its contents; and, as directly bearing upon the matter in hand, I quote the following passage from a letter written to Hugh Thomas by Mr. William Lewes, of Llwynnderw, which will be found at folio 307. The date is January 19th, 1709-10:—

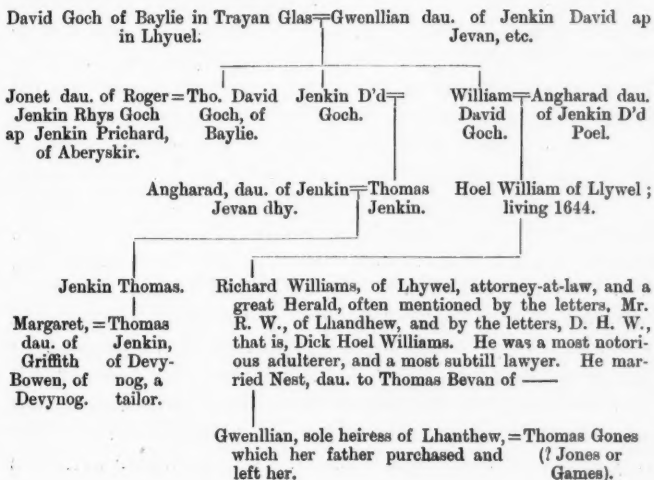
"You will receive herein an extract of the pedegree you desir'd taken out of the rough drawght of Mr. Edward's out of Mr. Rich'd W'ms booke. If I have bin any way short in it be

pleas'd to communicate y'r further thoughts, and I shall endeavour y'r satisfac'on. I am weary long since of these unprofitable studies, w'ch the bad disposition of the times and the prodigious ignorance of most of the gentry in these parts have so much decry'd and undervalu'd that it were almost madness in any man to concern himself in such an affair. I had it in my thoughts heretofore to transcribe all ye genealogies that I have dispers'd confusedly in severall bookes into one or two volumes in another method then [than] Mr. Edwards or those before him have done; that is, to put all ye descendants of a patriarch in the same booke, viz., for instance, the descendants of Kradoc Vreichvras, as Bledhin ap Maynarch, Drympanog, Woogans, Griff. Gwyr, &c., in one continued series, and the title in every page thereof to be inscrib'd Kradoc Vreichvras. But *res angusta domi* obstructed that design, tho' I have made a considerable progress in it, being not enabl'd to keep an amanuensis or to travell forreign counties for further knowledge therein."

It will be observed that this letter contains practically the same passage as that which Mr. Yeatman has already quoted from a letter of Mr. Edward Prothero, junior. It is therefore clear that either Lewes had written an identical letter to some other of his correspondents, which letter came into Prothero's hands, or (which is the more probable) that Prothero had seen the letter in the *Harleian* volume, and had made a copy or an abstract of it. Now I quite agree with Mr. Yeatman that the arrangement of pedigrees here described is the arrangement of the *Golden Grove Book*, and that the author of that book must have drawn his material from either Edwards or Lewes. The letter of Mr. William Lewes, however, carries us much beyond the point at which we had arrived with Mr. Yeatman. In the first place, we find that Mr.

Edwards had not thought of such an arrangement, and that the order and sequence of the pedigrees in the *Golden Grove* volumes are due to Lewes alone, who, by the end of 1709, had "made a considerable progress" with his new method. Secondly, we learn that Mr. Lewes had come into possession of some of Edwards's "rough drawghts;" and, thirdly, that these in turn had been taken from the book, or books, of Mr. Richard Williams, of Llywel, co. Brecon. In several of his letters to Hugh Thomas, William Lewes refers to the genealogical work of Richard Williams, and it is evident that he placed considerable confidence in his pedigrees.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lewes had also other authorities; for, in a postscript to the letter from which I have quoted, he observes: "I can't find in all ye bookes I have, neither in a transcript of M'r Ro. Vaughan's Ludlow booke, nor in Mr. Edwards' booke of Norman adventurers any armes assign'd to S'r Hugh Surdwall, kt., lord of Aberuske."

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Thomas (*Harleian* 4181, f. 100b) gives the descent of this Richard Williams as follows:—



It is pretty well agreed by those who have examined the *Golden Grove Book*, that it is no more than a copy, and probably a slavish copy, of some other collection; and I think it will be allowed that the evidence is strongly in favour of the paternity of Mr. Lewes's work. It is obvious that this point cannot be absolutely settled until Mr. Lewes's "one or two volumes," arranged according to "another method than Mr. Edwards or those before him," are discovered; and the question therefore arises, What has become of the Llwynderw manuscripts? An excellent little work entitled *Hanes Plwyfi Llangeler a Phenboyr* (1899), written by Mr. Daniel E. Jones, Llandyssul, gives some information on the subject. It is there stated—Llwynderw being a farmstead within the former parish—that Mr. William Lewes flourished from about 1680 to 1760. He was the fourth son of John Lewes, of Llysnewydd, and married Cecily, the daughter of Ieuan David Lloyd, M.A., of Llandyssul, and owner of Llwynderw, of which place Lewes became leaseholder. During his residence there he brought together a number of books and manuscripts which the Rev. Theophilus Evans, the author of *Drych y Prif Oesoedd*, characterised as the finest collection within his knowledge. He died childless. The greater part of the manuscripts, together with the printed books, found their way, according to the author of the work just mentioned, into the British Museum. This, I think, must be an error—at any rate, so far as concerns the manuscripts. It is also said that Dr. Gwenogvryn Evans, in 1897, came across several of the Lewes MSS. at the Herald's College amongst the Prothero collection, and this statement there need be no hesitation in accepting as absolutely accurate. One thick manuscript volume (*cyfrol drwchus*) of pedigrees is at present in the possession of Lieut.-Col. Lewes, of Llysnewydd. It should not be forgotten that Mr. Lewes never was an Officer of Arms; so that his work, however distinguished it may be, has not the *cachet* which attaches

to the infinitely less valuable collections of Hugh Thomas.<sup>1</sup>

We next come to the point, Who was the copyist of the *Golden Grove Book*? The volumes have been ascribed to the hand of Hugh Thomas, a conjecture which Mr. Yeatman has shown to be impossible.<sup>2</sup> That gentleman, the only critic who has not rested content with the imaginings of others, thinks the writer was the Rev. Evan Evans, distinguished amongst his contemporaries by the bardic title "Ieuan Brydydd Hir." "It is of his period, dated 1751-1771, and is initialed as the work of E. E." It is true, as Mr. Yeatman observes, that some of the pedigrees are brought down to the second half of the eighteenth century, and that this is just the period of the Rev. Evan Evans. But Mr. Yeatman appears to have hit upon the unfortunate Prydydd Hir only because he could not find another "E. E." of that period to whom, with any degree of probability, he could ascribe the writing of the *Book*. Yet Evan Evans, the poet, is not known to have had any taste for pedigrees; not a word referring to the considerable labour that the copying of the four volumes would necessarily entail can be found in his letters, or in those of his contemporaries. His handwriting is also very different to that of the *Golden Grove Book*. I have, therefore, been unable to accept Mr. Yeatman's identification.<sup>3</sup> There

<sup>1</sup> It is usually assumed that Hugh Thomas's province as Deputy-Herald comprised the whole of South Wales. This was not so; the counties of Cardigan and Radnor were outside his jurisdiction.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Stepney-Gulston (*Arch. Camb.*, loc. cit.) states that p. 1372 of the *Golden Grove Book* ends with the note: "23 Nov. 1760, compiled by Hugh Thomas, Deputy Garter King of Arms 1703." No such note appears upon that page, nor have I been able to discover it. It can, of course, be no more than a reference to a pedigree drawn up by Hugh Thomas in the year 1703.

<sup>3</sup> My friend, Mr. J. H. Davies, barrister-at-law, points out to me that it will not do to dismiss the claims of the Rev. Evan Evans too cavalierly. The poet can be proved from his correspondence to have been in the neighbourhood of Llwynnderw during the summer of 1765; but he was back at Llanfair Talhaiarn, in Denbighshire,

is, however, little doubt that the copyist was a person bearing the initials "E. E." He has written at the foot of the first leaf of the work, "Carmarthen, July 1765, E. E.," which evidently commemorates the day upon which he commenced or ended his labours. Now, this is not long after the death of Mr. Lewes, the exact date of whose decease is unknown, the parish registers of the period 1755-1760 being wanting. It has already been stated that Mr. Lewes married Cecily Lloyd, who died childless. He next married Catharine Pryce, of Rhydybenau, which union also proving fruitless, he adopted a niece, Ann Beynon, the daughter of John Beynon, of Trewern. She survived him, and in 1762 married the Rev. Richard Thomas, rector of Llanfyrnach, who took up his residence at Llwynderw. No children having blessed their union, the pair adopted a nephew, John Beynon, afterwards a successful lawyer, and a niece, Elizabeth Beynon. The latter married Walter Pryce, of Rhydybenau, on November 15th, 1764. The entry in the parish register relating to their marriage is given in Jones's *Hanes Plwyfi Llangeler a Phenboyr*, p. 128. The witnesses signing the register are William Beynon and Emanuel Evans. In the latter I would recognise the copyist of the *Golden Grove Book*.

A letter of inquiry addressed to the local historian, Mr. Daniel E. Jones, was returned to me with the notification that he had left the neighbourhood. A second communication to the Rev. W. Williams, vicar of Llangeler, brought a courteous reply to the effect that the signatures of the two witnesses were almost

by the end of September, after a detention for a whole month at Bala by reason of illness. It is curious that in the letter to Mr. Richard Morris, from which the above particulars have been gathered, the poet should end his epistle with the words: "I continue still at my leisure hours to transcribe old MSS., and have collected a great many notes to illustrate *Nennius*, which, please God I live and be well, shall be one day or other published" (*Gwaith Ieuan Brydydd Hir*, p. 200). But not a word about having in hand, or in anticipation, the transcription of Mr. William Lewes's new arrangement of pedigrees.

certainly written by them respectively, and a rough tracing of that of Emanuel Evans. After careful comparison with the *Golden Grove Book*, I have no doubt of the identity of the hands. The circumstances which led to the writing of the volumes may well have been the following:—Both David Edwards, of Rhyd-y-gors, and William Lewes, of Llwynderw, died without issue. The manuscripts of the former were speedily dispersed, a number of volumes going into the possession of Mr. Lloyd, of Alltyrodyn (spelt “Alltyndine” by Mr. Yeatman), in the parish of Llandyssil, co. Cardigan, from a descendant of which family they were purchased by Mr. Edward Prothero, to be again sold by him to the Heralds’ College. Three volumes (Mr. Yeatman says five) are in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Several volumes remained in the Edwards’ family, according to the account of Mr. Prothero, quoted by Mr. Yeatman. Others, perhaps the major share, came to Mr. Lewes. The Lewes collection, in its turn, was scattered far and wide in a few years after the death of its patient collector and compiler. But it is most likely that this did not take place (at any rate, so far as relates to the “one or two volumes” which Mr. Lewes had written in 1709-10 “in another method”) until after they had been copied by “E. E.” in 1765.

Of this “E. E.,” or Emanuel Evans, as I take him to be, I have been able to discover nothing certain. I think he was of the family of Pensinrug, in the parish of Llangeler.<sup>1</sup> This is, however, no more than conjecture, which I hope one of our Carmarthenshire members will either substantiate or demolish. One thing is certain, namely,

<sup>1</sup> An extraordinary attempt of some members of this family to claim descent from Sir Walter Havard, “a Norman knight, who came from Havre de Grace, in France, in 1056,” and from “Roderick the Great, about the ninth century,” fortified by references to the *Lewes’ MSS.*, is exposed in Jones’s *Hanes Plwyfi Llangeler a Phenboyr*, p. 137. The family of Pensinrug, during the eighteenth century, delighted in a peculiar selection of truly “Christian” names; Methusalem, Luther, and Joshua occur.



that Emanuel Evans was intimately acquainted with the Llwynderw family, for he witnesses to the marriage of Elizabeth Beynon, great-niece to Mr. William Lewes, about four years after the death of the genealogist. Nothing would be more natural than that he should have taken a copy of Mr. Lewes's *magnum opus*—the value and originality of which must have been well known—either upon his own account, or for a wealthy patron. It is hardly likely that this patron was the Earl of Carberry, as suggested by Theophilus Jones—a suggestion apparently accepted by Mr. Wood—inasmuch as that earldom had become extinct in 1712.<sup>1</sup> It is, of course, possible that the copy may have been made several years prior to the date which it bears, but against such a contention is the fact that the rest of the volumes appear to be strictly contemporary with the date "July, 1765," written on the first page; and if the transcript had been executed during the lifetime of Mr. Lewes, it would almost certainly bear traces of his amendments or additions.

Of its fortunes, until it came into the possession of the house of Cawdor, I am entirely ignorant, nor am I able to improve upon the speculations of Mr. Yeatman on the course it may have run. It may not be amiss to add to his suggestions a connection between Rhyd-y-gors and Stackpole Court created by the marriage of one of the collateral descendants of David Edwards, the herald, with a member of the family of Campbell.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It should be observed, on behalf of Theophilus Jones, that he does not, even "in effect", say that the book "taken by command of the Earl of Carberry" was the one now known as *The Golden Grove Book*, although I am disposed to agree with Mr. Wood that this is what he meant. What he actually does say (dealing with the pedigree of Wilkins of Lanquian, *Hist. of Brecknockshire*, old ed. ii, 139-40; new ed., 238) is:—"A MS. in the handwriting of Mr. Thomas Wilkins, Rector of St. Mary's Church, differs from the early part of this pedigree, as does Spencer's Survey, but I copy the MS. from the books of the Arwydd-feirdd, taken by command of the Earl of Carberry, which I have generally found correct."

<sup>2</sup> I have appended a pedigree of the family of Rhyd-y-gors, which, with its ramifications, should be of interest to Carmarthenshire men. It ought to be easy to bring it up to date.

It is, perhaps, too soon to attempt to estimate the authority to be attached to *The Golden Grove Book* as a collection of pedigrees. We know too little of the great mediæval collections of the true Arwydd-feirdd, upon which it and most of the other late collections profess to be founded. We do not know how closely David Edwards, Richard Williams, and William Lewes followed their predecessors, or how far they were amenable to those influences that render much of the work of the regular Officers of Arms of the second half of the sixteenth, and first half of the seventeenth, centuries, absolutely unreliable. Of *original* authority it has not a scrap, apart from the additions to many of the pedigrees which its copyist, or Theophilus Jones (to whom it was lent for many years), were enabled to supply from their personal knowledge. As one who knows the Welsh pedigree manuscripts at the British Museum pretty thoroughly, I may be permitted the remark that I am inclined to rate *The Golden Grove Book* rather low, though decidedly higher than the pedigree collections of Hugh Thomas. While echoing Mr. Stepney-Gulston's longing to have it in print, I am bound to say that I do not think it would satisfy the desire of those who wish to see Welsh heraldry and genealogy fixed upon a true historic basis. This will never be until we have a scientifically-edited version, or, better still, a facsimile, of one of the magnificent collections of pedigrees formed before the genealogically-'spacious' days of Elizabeth, of which there are several volumes in the great library at Peniarth.

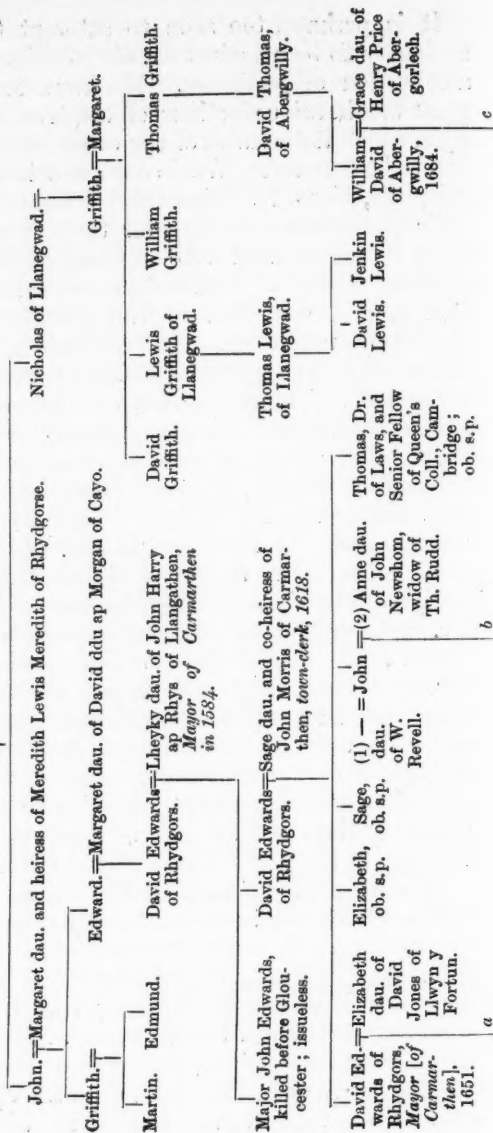
In placing the volumes in the Public Record Office, and in permitting them to be freely examined there, the late and present noble owners have conferred a great boon upon Welsh genealogists; but I cordially agree with Mr. Yeatman in thinking that if Lord Cawdor would transfer them to the British Museum, upon the same liberal conditions, their value to students would be immensely enhanced, because of the opportunities of comparison with other collections which the great Bloomsbury institution alone affords.

PEDIGREE OF THE FAMILY OF EDWARDS, RHYD-Y-GORS, Co. CARMARTHEN.

From *British Museum, Harleian* 2,291, fo. 14. The italicised additions are from *The Golden Grove Book*, pages B. 291 and B. 319,

Llewelin ap Thomas Vychan ap Thomas ap David ap Griffith ap Grono Goch of Llangathen = Maud dau. of Griffith ap Meredith ap Henry Don.

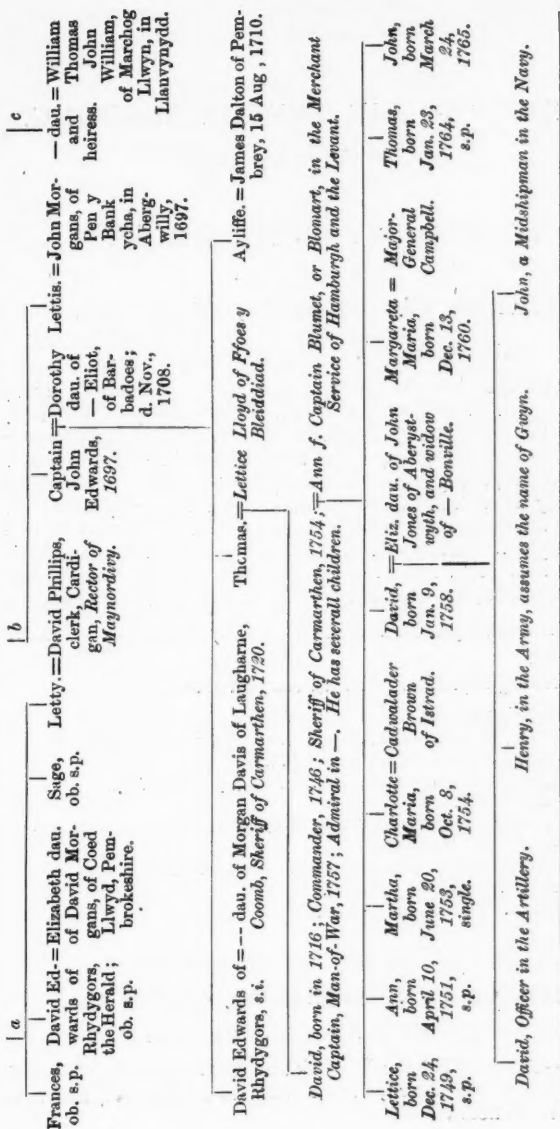
Jevan = Jane dau. of Griffith ap David Vychan, of Cayo.



a

b

c



<sup>1</sup> Note in GOLDEN GROVE BOOK.—This descent of Mr. Edwards of Rhdygors is thus laid in his last collections. But in his former collections he followeth Vairdre Book and Kenys Antiquary [that is, George Owen of Kemes, probably father and son], who bring it from Gwynfarth Dived.

## REPORT OF THE BRECON MEETING.

*(Continued from page 81.)*


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 ROUTES OF THE EXCURSIONS.
 

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**EXCURSION NO. 1.—TUESDAY, AUGUST 19th.****Y GAER (*BANNIUM*) AND BRECON.**

**Route.**—Carriages left the Bulwark at 9 A.M., and took the road, which goes in a westerly direction up the valley of the Usk, along the south bank, through Llanfaes and Llanspyddyd, as far as Penpont, where the river was crossed in order to reach TRALLWNG, the point furthest away from Brecon. The return journey from TRALLWNG was made in an easterly direction, along the north bank of the Usk to Y GAER (*Bannium*), thence turning north-east by Penoyre to LLANDEFAELOG-FACH, and back to Brecon. PEN-Y-CRUG was visited on foot from Penoyre. In the afternoon, the churches of BRECON were visited on foot.

LUNCHEON was provided at PENOYRE, by invitation of R. D. Cleasby, Esq.

The following objects of interest were visited :—

- Llanspyddyd (*Church and early Crossed Stone*).
- Aberbran (*Ancient Mansion, belonging formerly to the Game family*).
- Trallwng (*Church and Ogam Inscribed Stone*).
- Y Gaer (*Roman Station of Bannium and Maen-y-Morwynion*).
- Battle (*Maenhir*).
- Penoyre (*Residence of R. D. Cleasby, Esq., and Roman Inscribed Stone*).
- Pen-y-Crug (*Ancient British Camp*).
- Llandeafelog-fach (*Church and erect Cross-Slab of Briamail*).
- Brecon (*St. John's Priory Church*).
- Brecon *St. Mary's Parish Church*).

**EXCURSION NO. 2.—WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20th.****TALGARTH AND LLANGORSE.**

**Route.**—Carriages left the Bulwark at 9 A.M., proceeding by road north-east to TALGARTH, thence south to LLANGORSE, and west back to BRECON.

LUNCHEON was provided at GWERNYFED, by invitation of Col. T. Wood ; and Tea at LLANGORSE, by invitation of Col. R. D. Garnons-Williams.

The following objects of interest were visited :—

- Llanddew (*Church and Mediæval Inscribed Cross-Slab*).
- Llanvillo (*Unvestored Church, with Rood-loft and Norman Doorway, with Sculptured Lintel*).
- Brynllys (*Castle and Church*).
- Talgarth (*Church*).
- Gwernyfed (*Mansion of seventeenth century*).
- Llangorse (*Church with Inscribed Stones and Crannog*).

### EXCURSION NO. 3.—THURSDAY, AUGUST 21st.

#### LLANFIHANGEL CWM-DU AND GLANUSK PARK.

**Route.**—Carriages left the Bulwark at 9 A.M., taking the high road down the Usk valley in a south-easterly direction to GLANUSK PARK, and making a slight détour to reach LLANFIHANGEL CWM-DU and TRETOWER. The return journey from GLANUSK PARK to BRECON was made along the road on the opposite bank of the Usk, through Llanthetty and Llanfrynach.

LUNCHEON was provided at GLANUSK PARK, by invitation of the President.

The following objects of interest were visited :—

- Llanhamlach (*Church and Inscribed Stone of Moridic*).
- Scethrog (*"Victorinus" Inscribed Stone*).
- Llansantffread (*Church and Grave of Henry Vaughan, the Silurist*).
- Pen-y-gaer (*Roman (?) Camp*).
- Llanfihangel Cwm-dû (*Church, with Rood-screen, and Inscribed Stone of Catacus, the son of Tegernacus*).
- Tretower (*Church, Castle, fortified Mansion, and Roman Inscribed Stones*).
- Glanusk Park (*the residence of the Rt. Hon. Lord Glanusk; Ogam Inscribed Stone*).
- Llanthetty (*Church and Inscribed Stone of Gurdon the Priest*).
- Pencelli (*Remains of Castle*).
- Llanfrynach (*Church and Inscribed Stone*).

### EXCURSION NO. 4.—FRIDAY, AUGUST 22nd.

#### LLYWEL AND BRECON.

**Route.**—The members assembled at the Railway Station at 8.10 A.M., and were conveyed by train in a westerly direction up the valley of the Usk to DEVYNOC, and thence by carriage further west to LLYWEL. The return journey was made by the same



Erect Cross-slab of Moridic at Llanhamlach.



route. In the afternoon, the remaining antiquities of Brecon, besides the churches, were visited on foot.

LUNCHEON was provided at FFRWDGRECH, by invitation of David Evans, Esq.

The following objects of interest were visited :—

Devynock (*Church and Inscribed Stone*).

Trecastle (*Earthworks of Norman Castle*).

Llywel (*Church*).

Ffrwdgrech (*The residence of David Evans, Esq.; collection of Roman Antiquities from Bannium*).

Brecon (*Remains of Castle and Town Walls, Newton House, and Christ's College*).

#### NOTES ON OBJECTS OF INTEREST VISITED DURING THE EXCURSIONS.

**Prehistoric Remains.**—The prehistoric antiquities seen during the excursions were inferior, both in quantity and quality, to those in other parts of Wales where the meetings of the Association have been held. It is not altogether easy to explain this; certainly, it would be unsafe to assume that all the important monuments have been destroyed. The prehistoric remains visited on the first day comprised only a maenhir, or standing stone, near Battle, and an ancient British hill-fort of the usual type, called the Crûg, lying two miles north-west of Brecon. On the second day the site of the crannog, or lake-dwelling, discovered on a small island near the shore of Llangorse Lake, by the Rev. E. N. Dumbleton, in 1869, was examined. It is interesting as being almost the only example in Wales of a kind of pile structure which is common in Ireland, Scotland, and Switzerland. All that can now be seen is a row of piles sticking up above the surface of the water. On the same day, had time permitted, the party should have seen the remains of a chambered cairn on Manest Farm, a mile south-west of Tal-y Llyn Junction, known as Ty-Iltyd—that is to say, the House of Iltyd. The chamber has been denuded of the cairn which once covered it, exposing the large flat slabs of stone forming the sides and roof. The chamber was very possibly used as a hermit's cell at one time, and there are several small incised crosses carved on the slabs, either during the period of its occupation, or by pious pilgrims to the spot after the cell had been deserted. Iltyd was a contemporary of St. David and St. Samson, and gives his name to Llantwit Fawr, in Glamorganshire. A large number of churches are dedicated to him in South Wales. A parallel case of the probable use of a Neolithic burial chamber as a dwelling-place at a much later period is Wayland Smith's cave, in Berkshire, which is mentioned in a Saxon document of the eighth or ninth century.

**Romano-British Remains.**—The Roman station of Bannium, now called the Gaer, which was seen on the first day's excursion, is situated three miles west of Brecon, in a strong position formed by the junction of the river Yscir and the Usk. Extensive masses of masonry are still visible above the ground, and the plan of the fortification can easily be traced. From time to time Roman antiquities are found on the site, consisting chiefly of Samian ware, various other kinds of pottery, blue glass beads, coins, bricks, and tiles. Some of the tiles are stamped "LEG II AVG," showing that the station was occupied by the Second Legion (Augusta), the headquarters of which was at Caerleon-on-Usk. Most of the relics found here were shown to the members on Friday, when they visited Ffrwdgrech, near Brecon, the residence of Mr. David Evans, the proprietor of the Gaer. If the site were to be systematically explored, it would doubtless yield a plentiful harvest of antiquities; and, in laying bare the plan of the buildings and perhaps discovering inscribed objects, the excavators would certainly throw much light on the Roman occupation of Wales. At present, although most of the finds are preserved, no record seems to be kept of the exact spots where the antiquities were dug up. Near the Roman station of Bannium is a sepulchral monument, sculptured with the figures of a Roman soldier and his wife, known as the Maen-y-Morwynnion, or "Maiden Stone." It bears an inscription, now nearly obliterated. There is another "Maiden Stone" near Benachie, Aberdeenshire; but this is an early Christian monument, with interlaced ornament upon it. Then there is the "Maiden Castle," near Dorchester, and many other instances of the use of the word might be cited. Between the Gaer and Brecon there is an ancient paved trackway, which is called Roman, but may be of almost any age, from the prehistoric period down to the time of Bernard Newmarch, the conqueror of Brecknockshire. Mr. F. Haverfield read a valuable paper on Bannium at the Evening Meeting on Tuesday. He said that, as far as outward appearances went, there had been no reconstruction of the walls, and that consequently the place had been occupied for a comparatively short period. To judge from the evidence of the coins found on the site, the period of occupation would be from about A.D. 70 to A.D. 120. After that time, the country was no doubt subdued, and a strong garrison would be unnecessary. Mr. Haverfield strongly advocated the use of the spade, as the speediest method of solving the various archæological problems connected with the struggle between the stubborn Silures, fighting for freedom amongst the fastnesses of the Brecknockshire hills, against the might of Imperial Rome. At Penoyre House, the residence of Mr. R. D. Cleasby, near the Gaer, the party had an opportunity of examining one of the most beautifully-cut Roman sepulchral inscriptions in Wales. Unfortunately the slab is broken in half, so that the ends of all the lines are missing, thus affording the assembled antiquaries an endless field for speculation. The stone was found a few years ago

at Battle, near Penoyre, and also not far from the Gaer. Other Roman inscriptions of inferior interest were seen during Thursday's excursion at Tretower and Scethrog.

**Early Christian Remains.**—The valley of the Usk, between Devynock and Crickhowel, contains an unrivalled series of inscribed and sculptured stones of the early Christian period, dating from about A.D. 500 to A.D. 1000. In fact, no district in Wales affords a better opportunity for the study of the development of monuments of this class. The series commences with the rude pillar-stones, the inscriptions on which are simply debased copies of Roman epitaphs, differing from them in two respects: (1) that the letters are very ill-formed; and (2) the lines, instead of reading horizontally from left to right, read vertically upwards from bottom to top. It is true that there are about a dozen pillar-stones in Great Britain with inscriptions cut horizontally, after the Roman fashion, but these are exceptions of very early date, as three of them have the Chi-Rho monogram, and two contain the Roman formula "Vixit annos . . ." The Celtic fashion of making the debased Latin inscriptions read vertically upwards instead of horizontally, probably arose from the fact that the Ogam inscriptions must read vertically because they are cut on the angle of the stone; and as many of the monuments are both bi-literal and bi-lingual, it would never do to have the Ogam inscription reading one way and the debased Latin inscription another. An example of a pillar-stone, with a debased Latin inscription entirely in capitals, was seen on Friday's excursion at Devynock. The members had an opportunity of examining specimens of the bi-literal and bi-lingual inscriptions at Trallwng on Tuesday and at Glanusk Park on Thursday. The most interesting feature of the Glanusk inscription is that it gives the rare Ogam letter X as the equivalent for the Latin P. The inscribed stone at Llanfihangel Cwm-dû (seen on Thursday) is a good instance of the transitional type in which several minuscule, or small letters, are mixed with the



Erect Cross-slab of  
Briamail at  
Llandefaelog-fach.

capitals. The inscription means: "Here lies Cattoc, son of Teyrnoc." Somewhere about the year A.D. 700, the capital letters ceased to be used, and the inscriptions were afterwards entirely in minuscules. Ogams also became obsolete, and as there was no further reason for continuing to make the Latin inscription parallel with the Ogam inscription, or vertical, the old Roman custom of cutting the letters in horizontal lines was reverted to. At the same time Celtic ornament and figure sculpture begins to make its appearance on the monuments. The best example near Brecon is the well-known cross-slab of Briamail, at Llandefaillog-fach (seen on Tuesday).

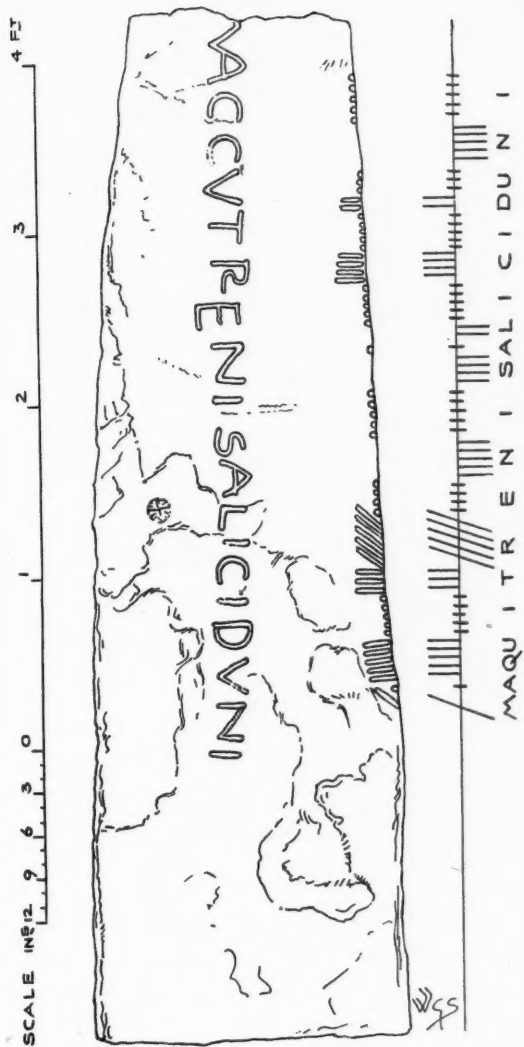
**Mediæval Remains.**—With the exception of Brecon Priory Church, which is too well known to need description here, the ecclesiastical architecture of the district is somewhat poor. Most of the churches have been either over-restored or rebuilt, so that very few old features now remain. Of the smaller village churches, that at Llanvillo, with its finely-carved rood-screen, and a doorway having a highly ornamented lintel, was distinctly the best worth seeing. Mediæval military architecture was represented by the round keeps of Brynlllys and Tretower, which are of the thirteenth century, and are built on the same plan as those at Pembroke, Coningsborough in Yorkshire, and Coucy in France. At Tretower there is also a fortified mansion of the fourteenth century, built round a courtyard, and having an interesting gateway and hall, with a massive timber roof.

WE are indebted to Dr. George Norman, of Bath, for kindly allowing us to reproduce his excellent photographs as illustrations to this report. The Pentre Poeth Ogam stone, one of the most interesting of the group of inscribed monuments in the upper valley of the Usk, is now in the British Museum, and therefore it could not be seen on the Friday's excursion when a visit was paid to Devynock, which is not far from the site where the stone originally stood.

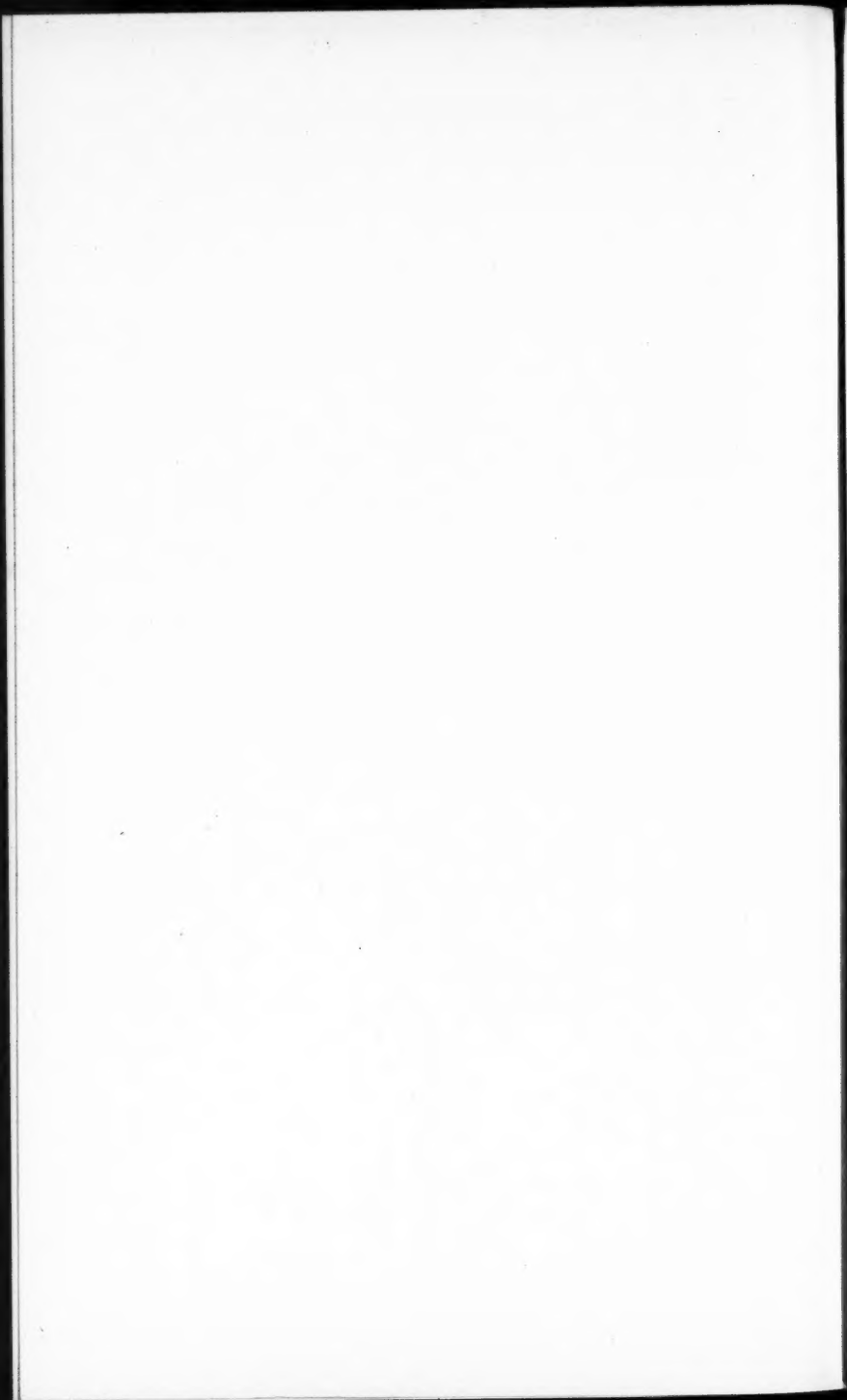
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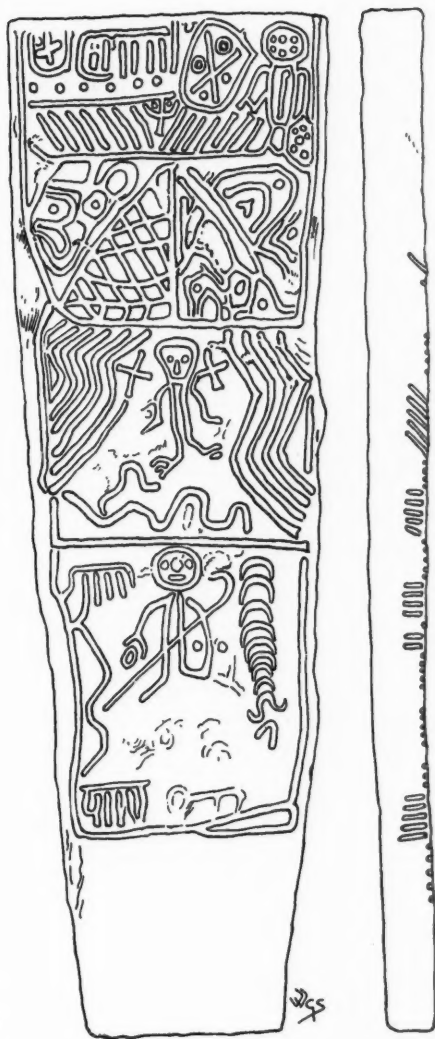
*Balance Sheet of Accounts*—As, up to the time of going to press, the Editor had not received the Balance Sheet of Accounts, it does not appear in the present number of the Journal.

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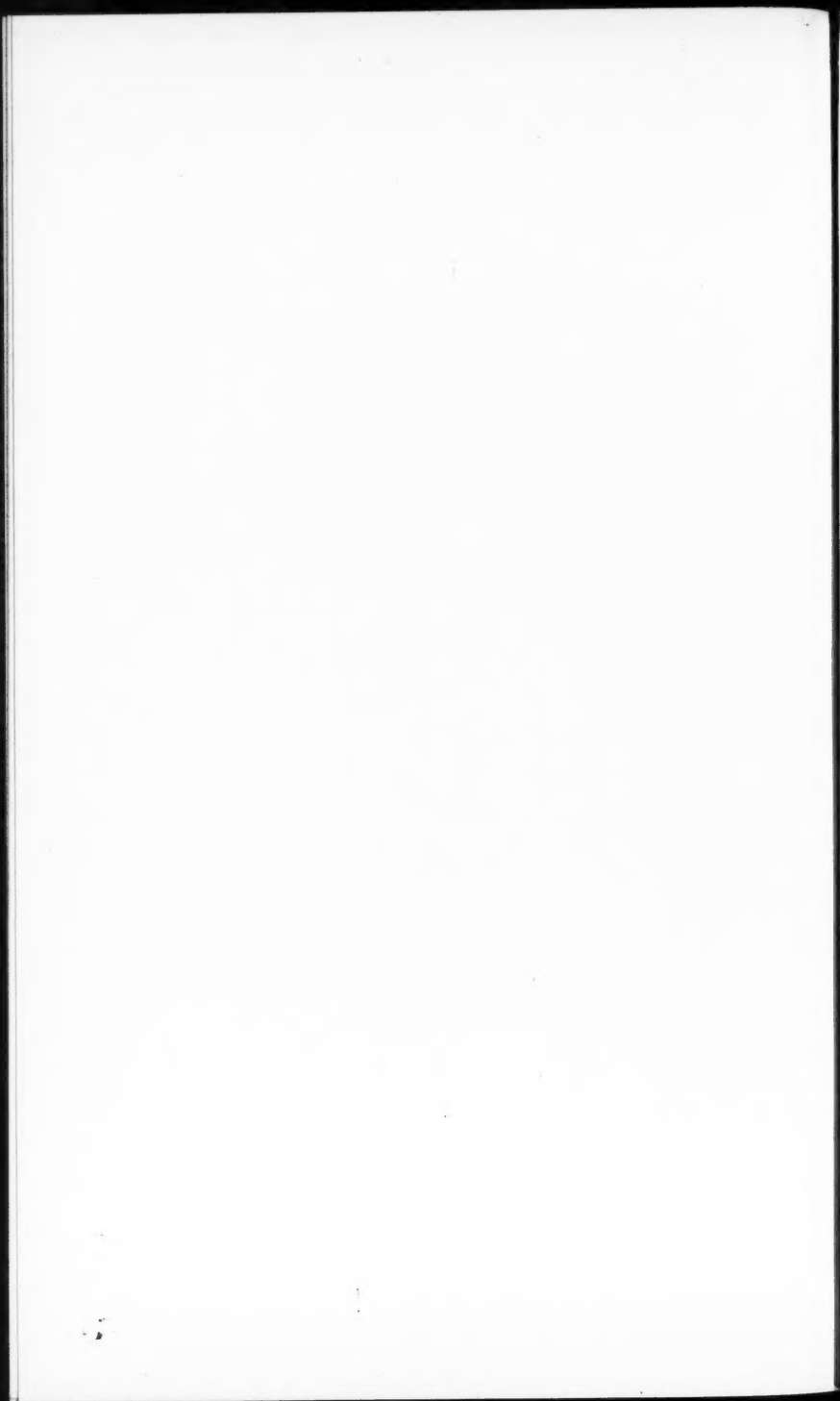
The Pentre Poeth Ogam Stone (Front)

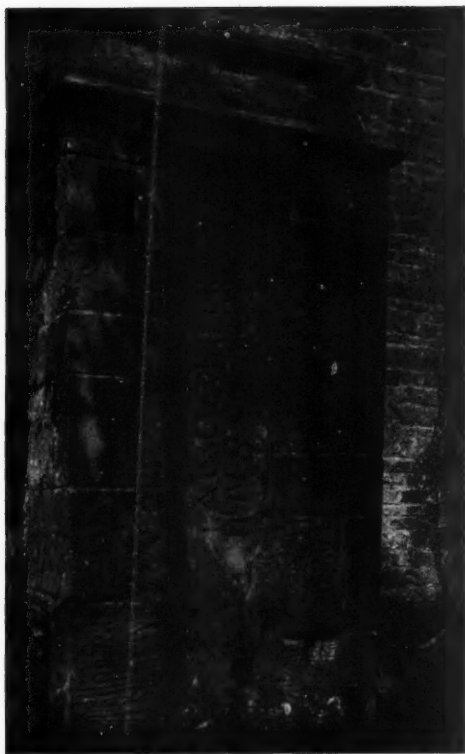




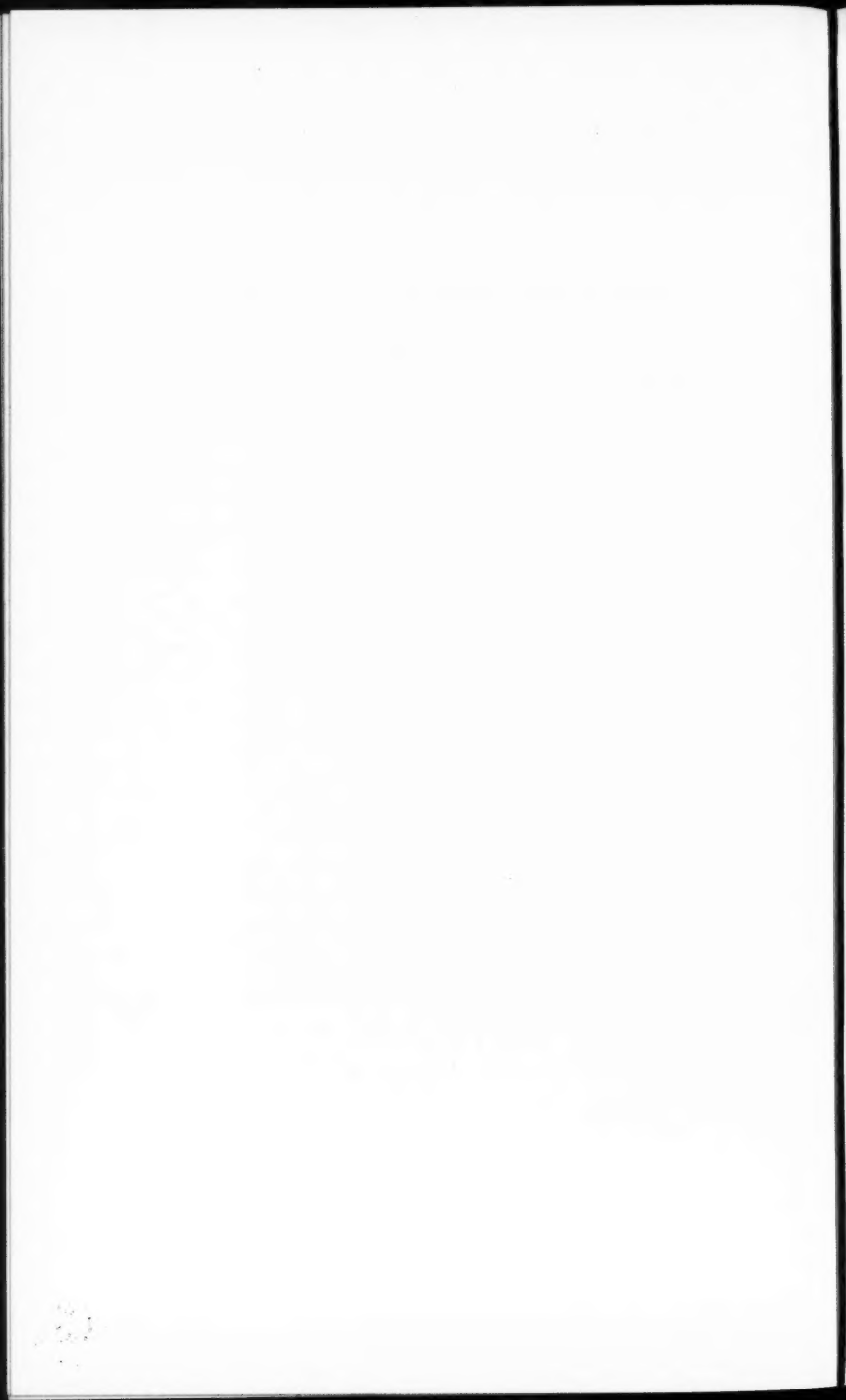
The Pentre Poeth Ogam Stone (Back).

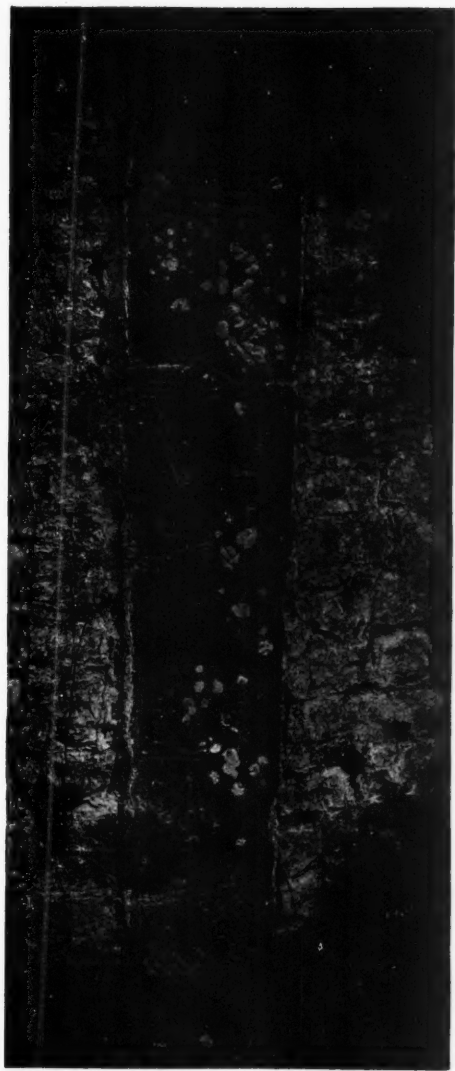






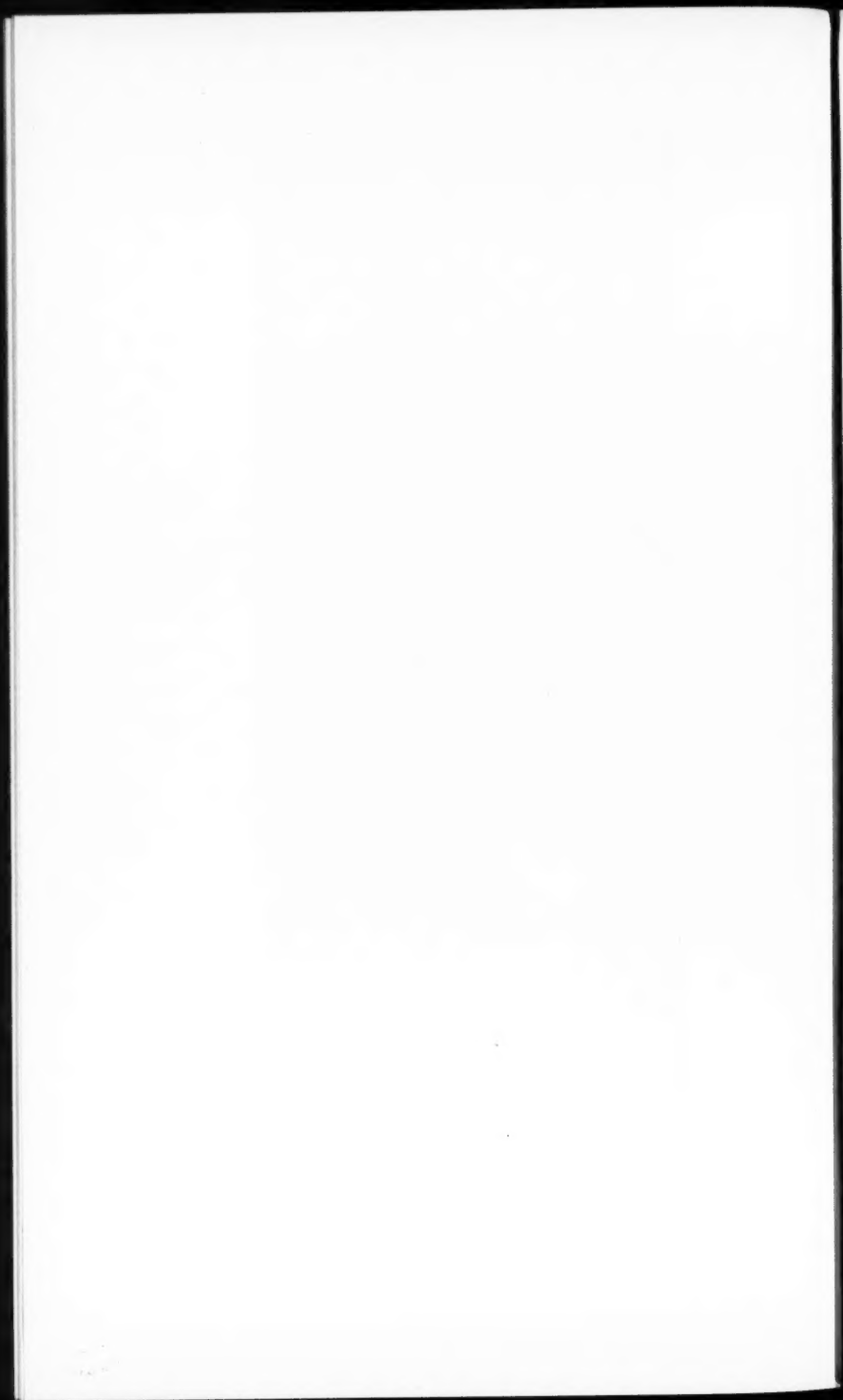
INSCRIBED STONE AT LLANFIHANGEL CWM-DŪ.  
(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)





ERECT CROSS-SLAB OF BRIAMAIL AT LLANDEFAELOG-FACH,  
BRECKNOCKSHIRE.

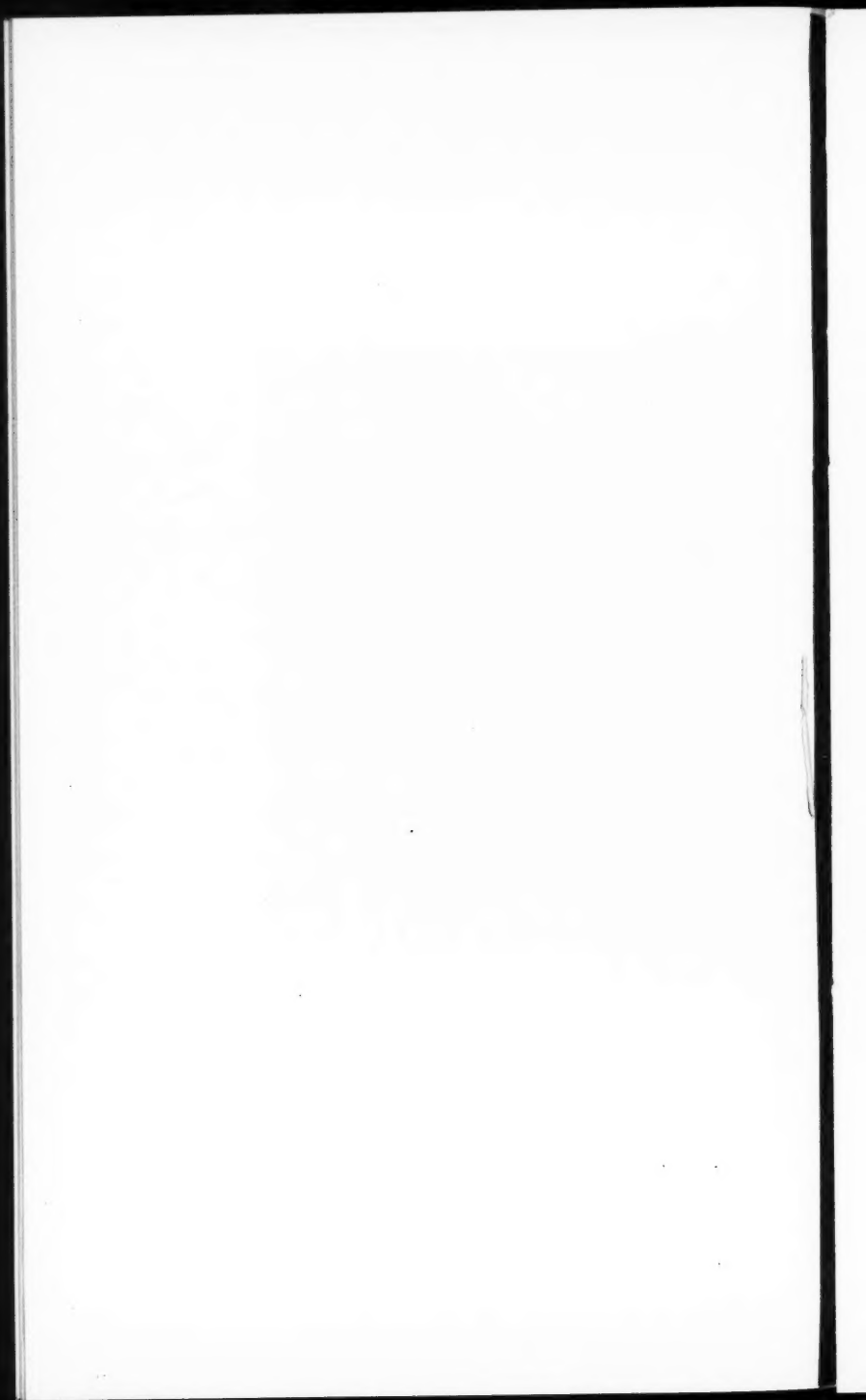
*(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)*



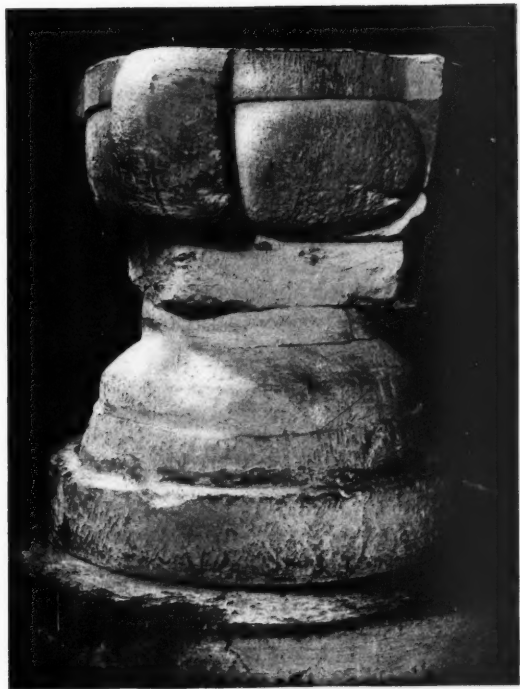


FONT IN LLANVILLO CHURCH, BRECKNOCKSHIRE.

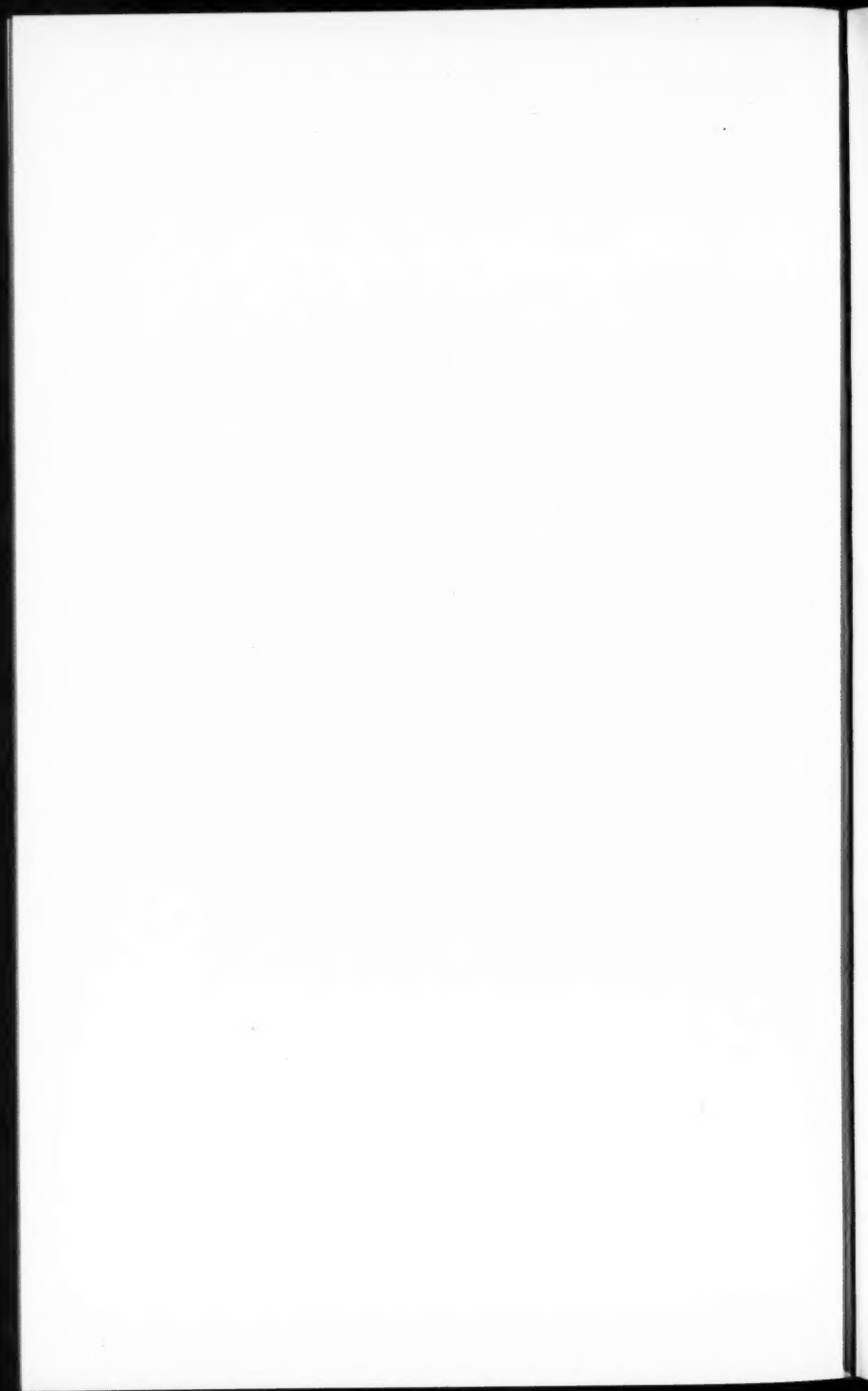
*(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)*

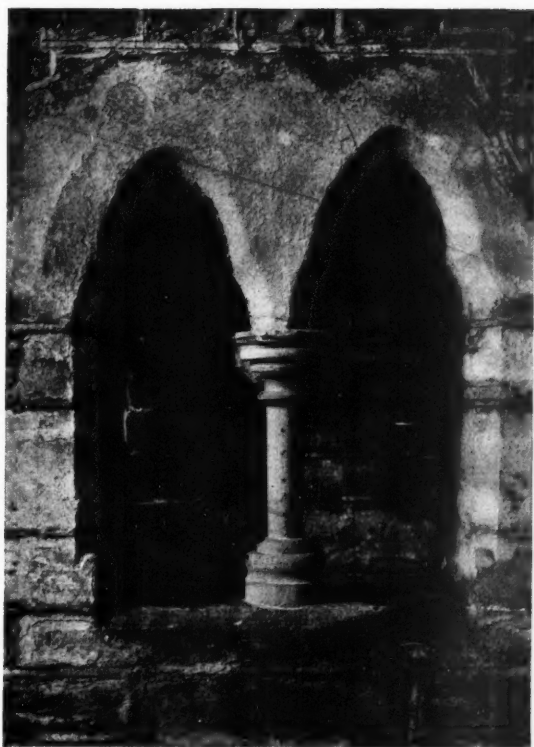






FONT IN BRYNLLYS CHURCH, BRECKNOCKSHIRE.  
(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)

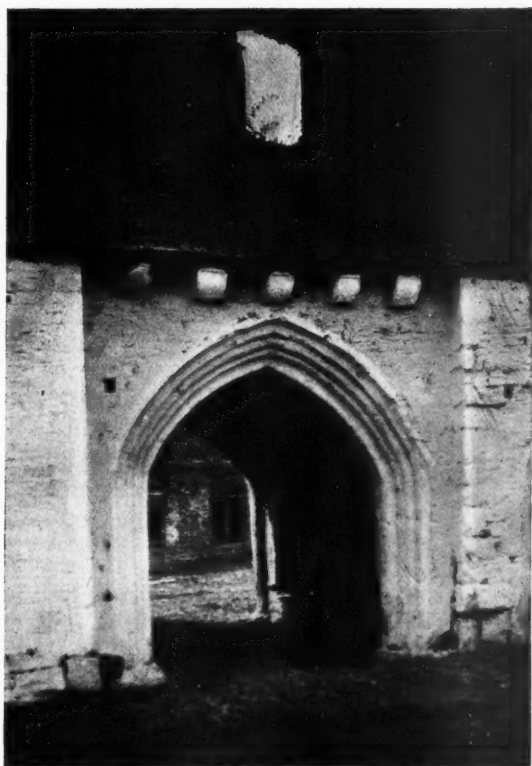




ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BRECON. EARLY ENGLISH PISCINA.

*(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)*

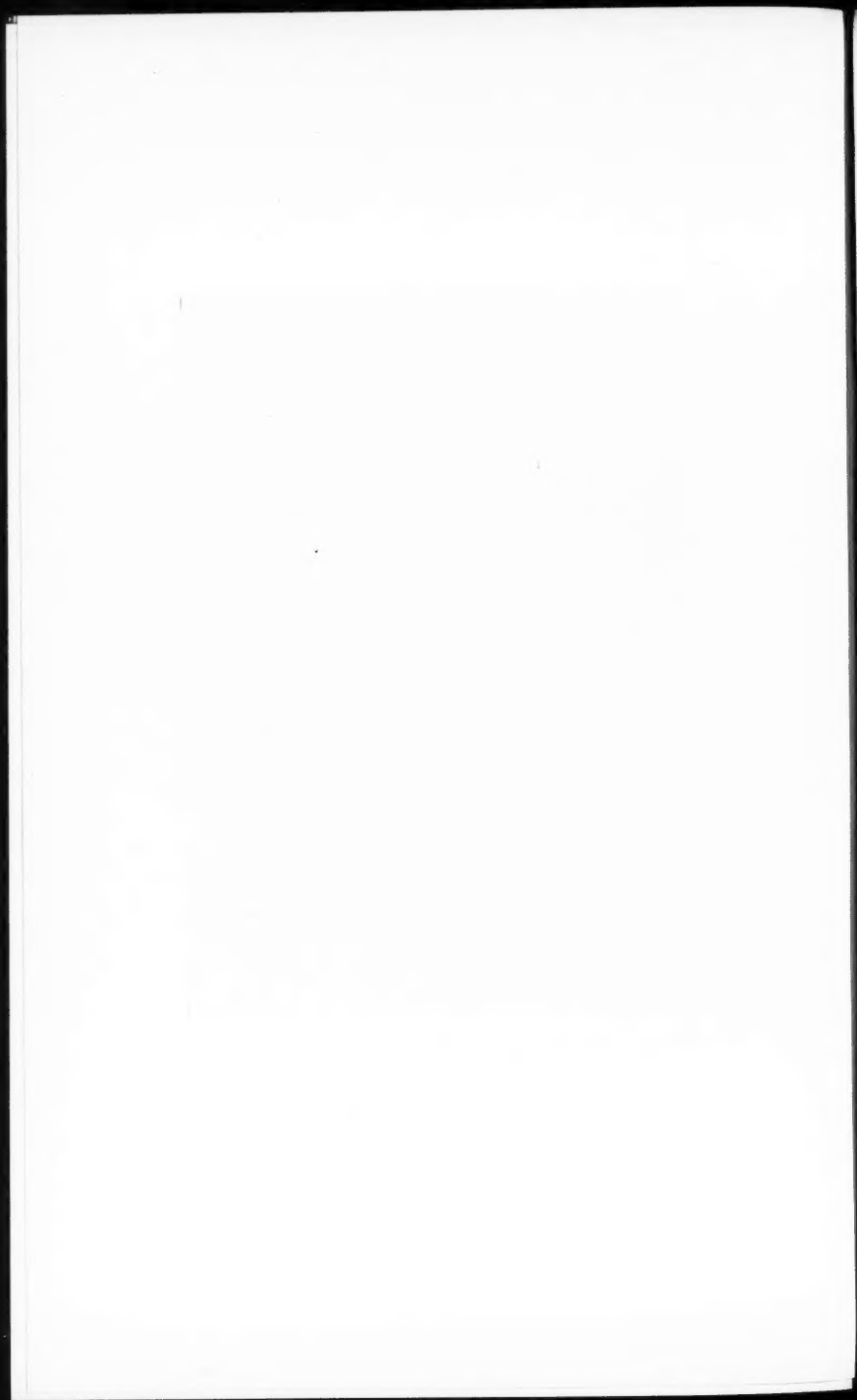


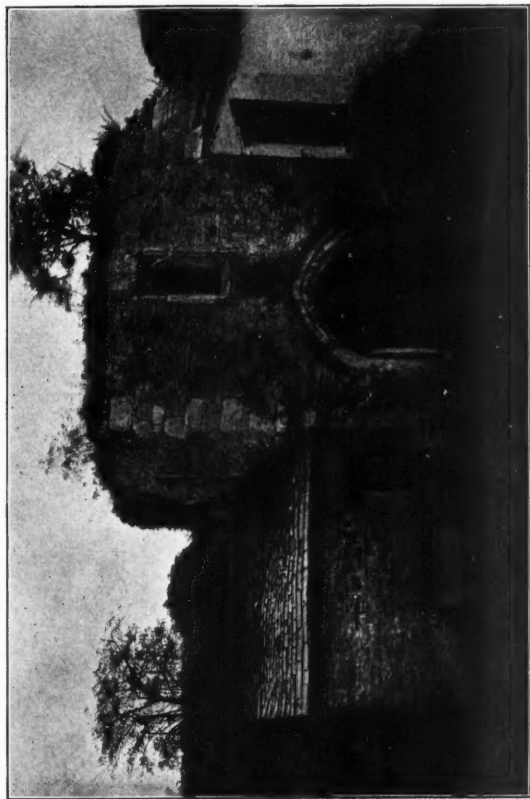


TRETOWER COURT, BRECKNOCKSHIRE. EXTERIOR OF ENTRANCE  
GATEWAY.

*(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)*







TRETOWER COURT, BRECKNOCKSHIRE. INTERIOR OF ENTRANCE GATEWAY.  
(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)

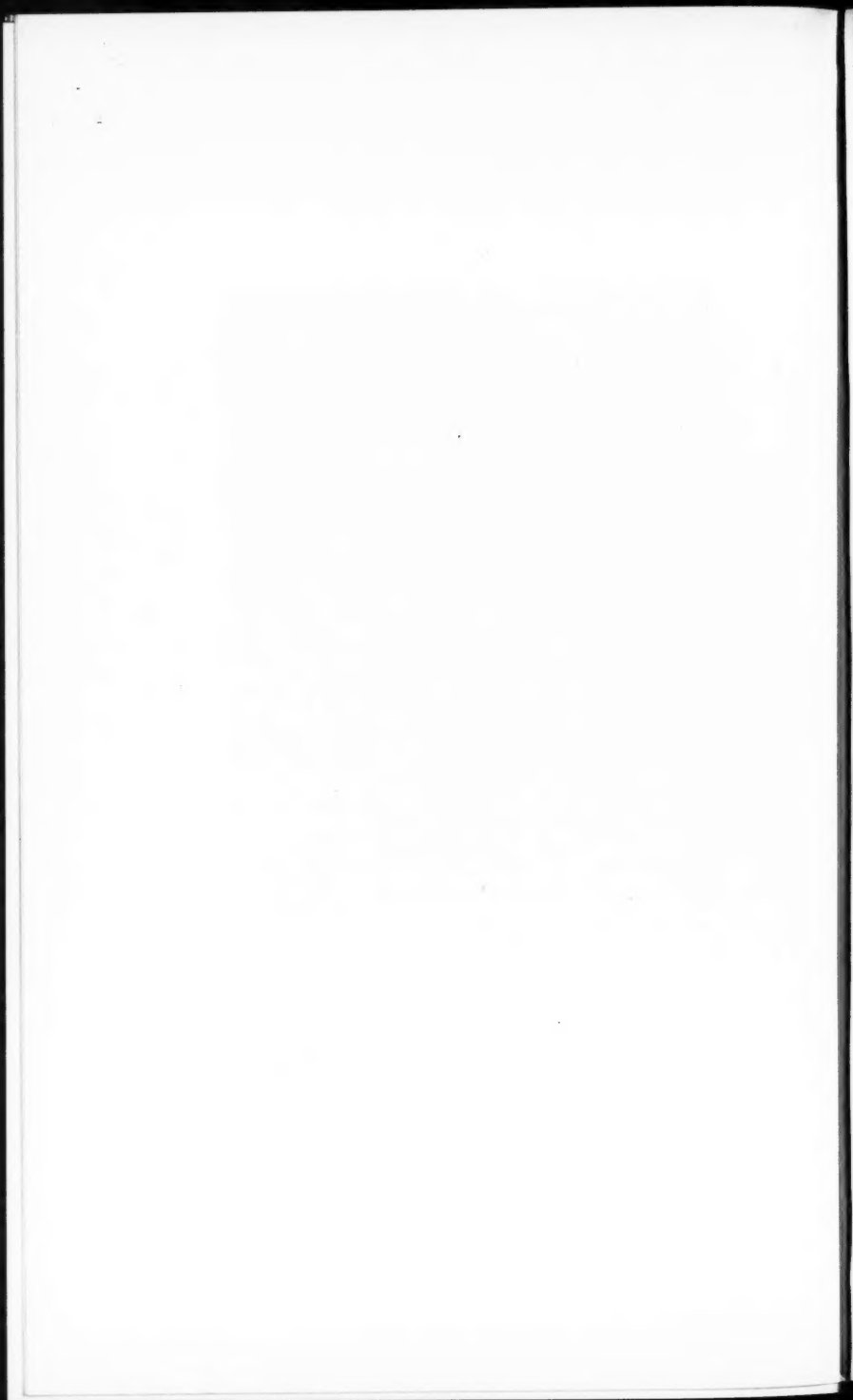


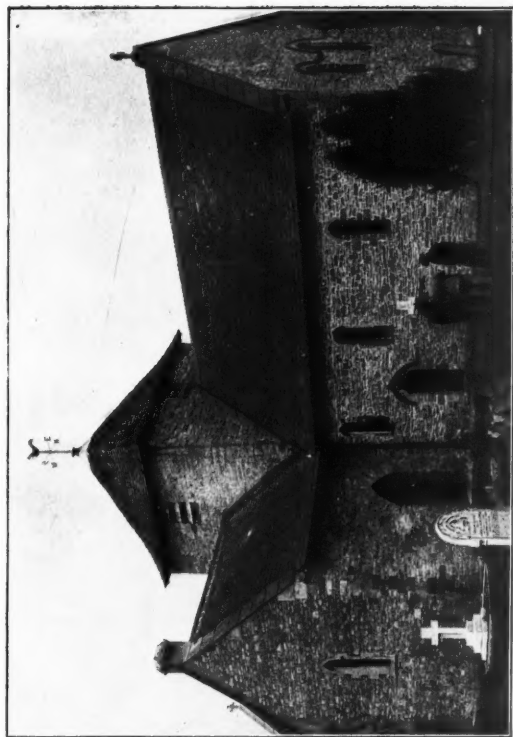






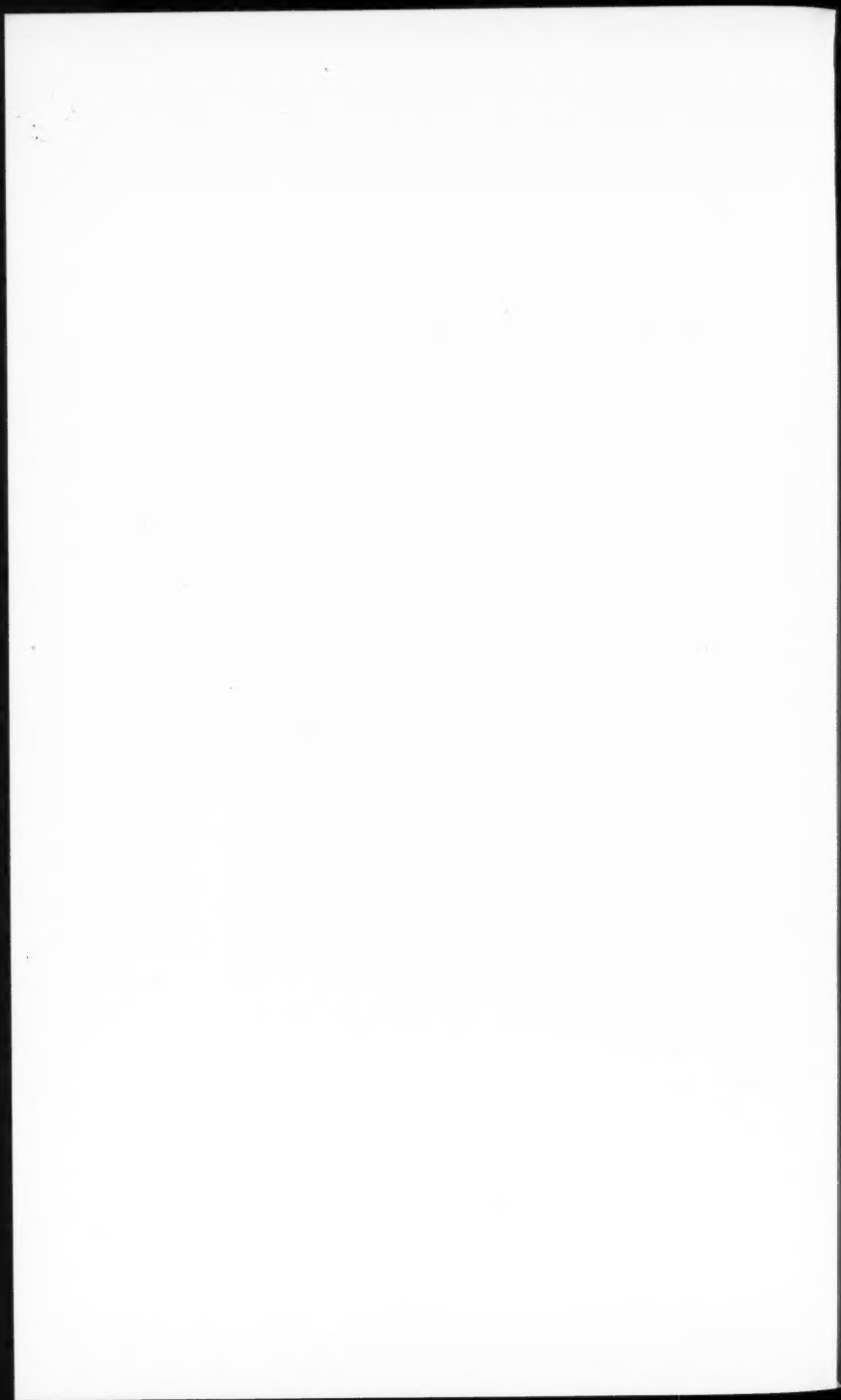
TRETOWER COURT, BRECKNOCKSHIRE. INTERIOR OF COURTYARD.  
(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)





LLANDDEW CHURCH, BRECKNOCKSHIRE. VIEW FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.  
(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)







LLANVILLO CHURCH, BRECKNOCKSHIRE. ROOD SCREEN.  
(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)

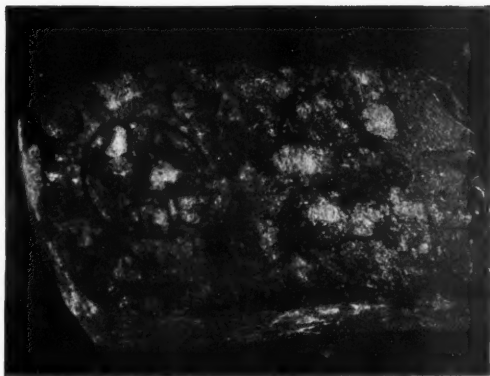






Llanvillo Church, Brecknockshire. Built-up Doorway in  
South Wall, with Diapered Lintel.

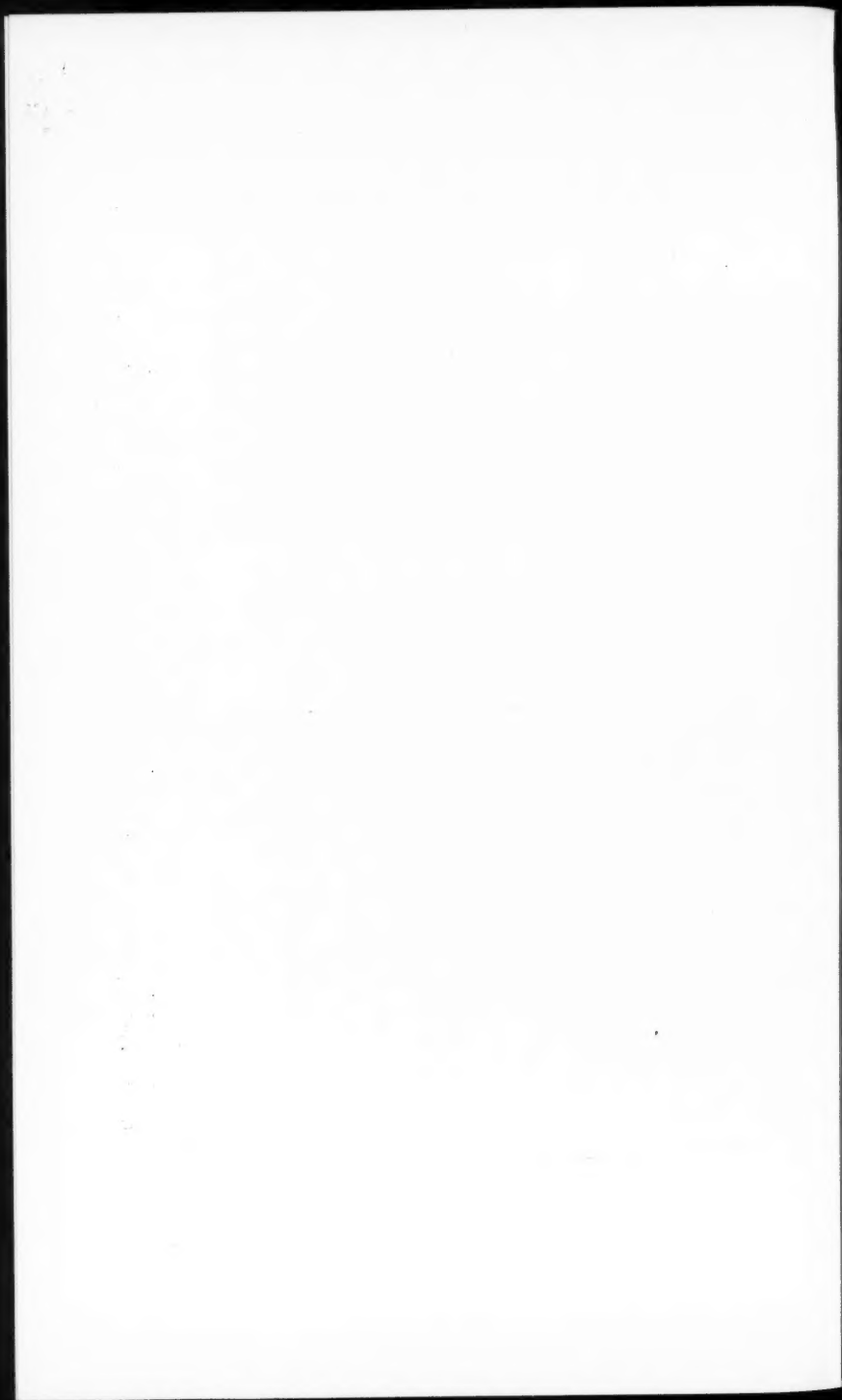
*(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)*

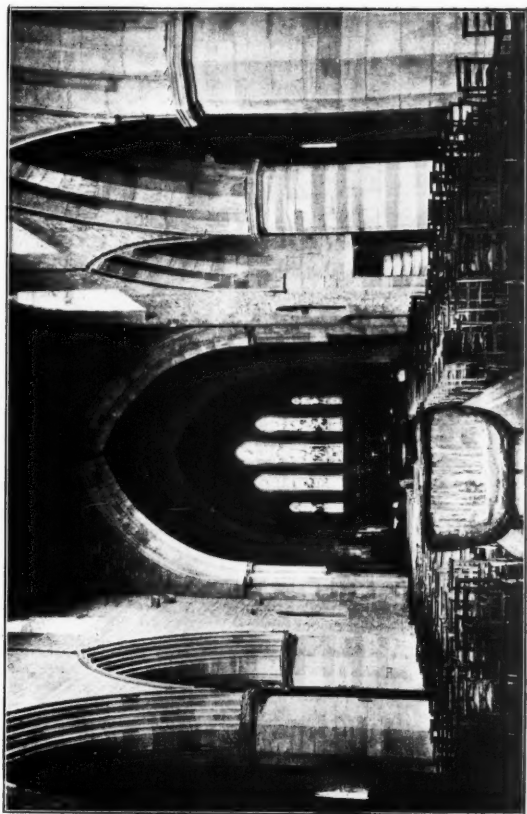


Stone with Incised Crosses and Circles at  
Llanspyddyd, Brecknockshire.

*(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)*

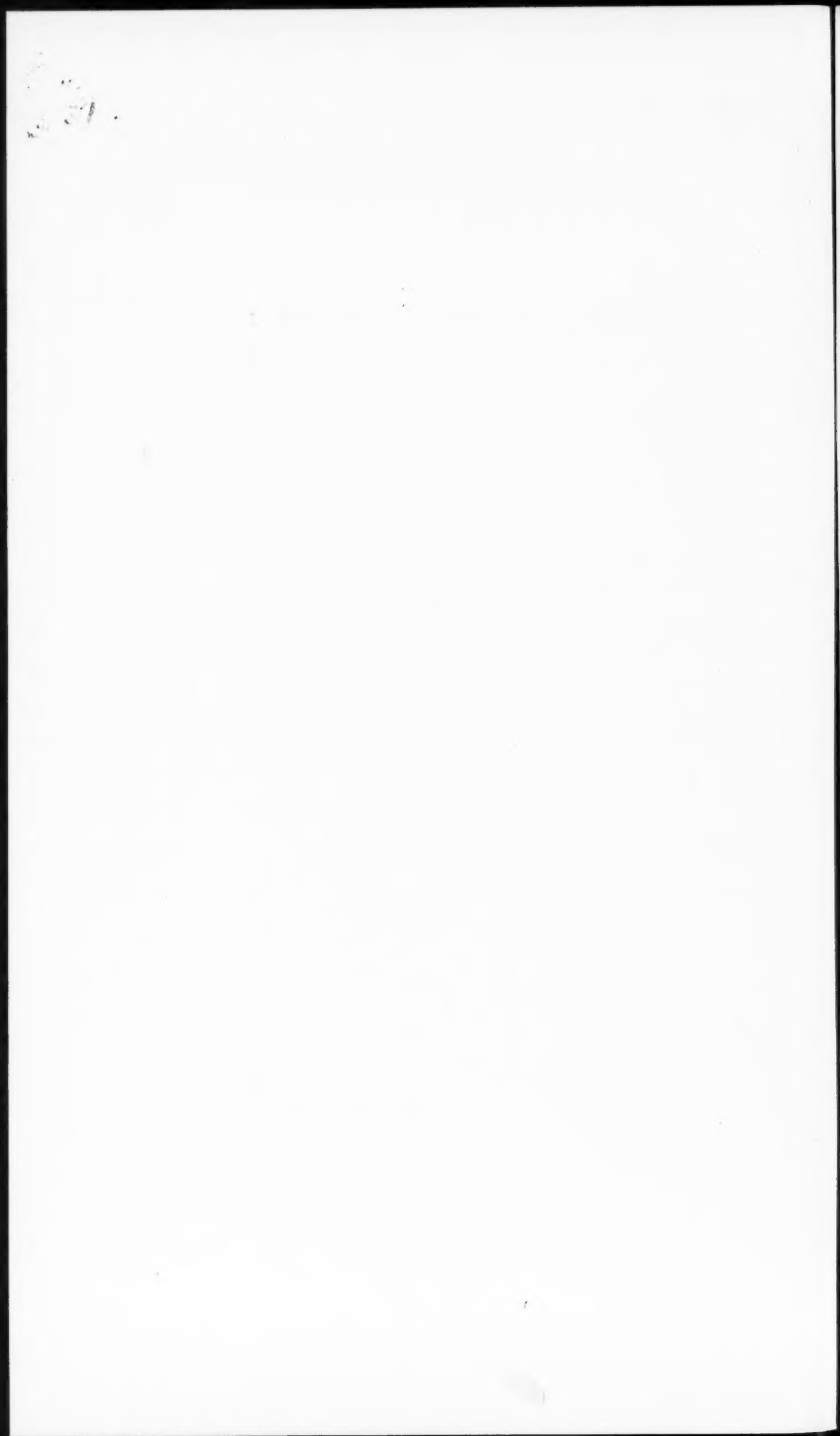


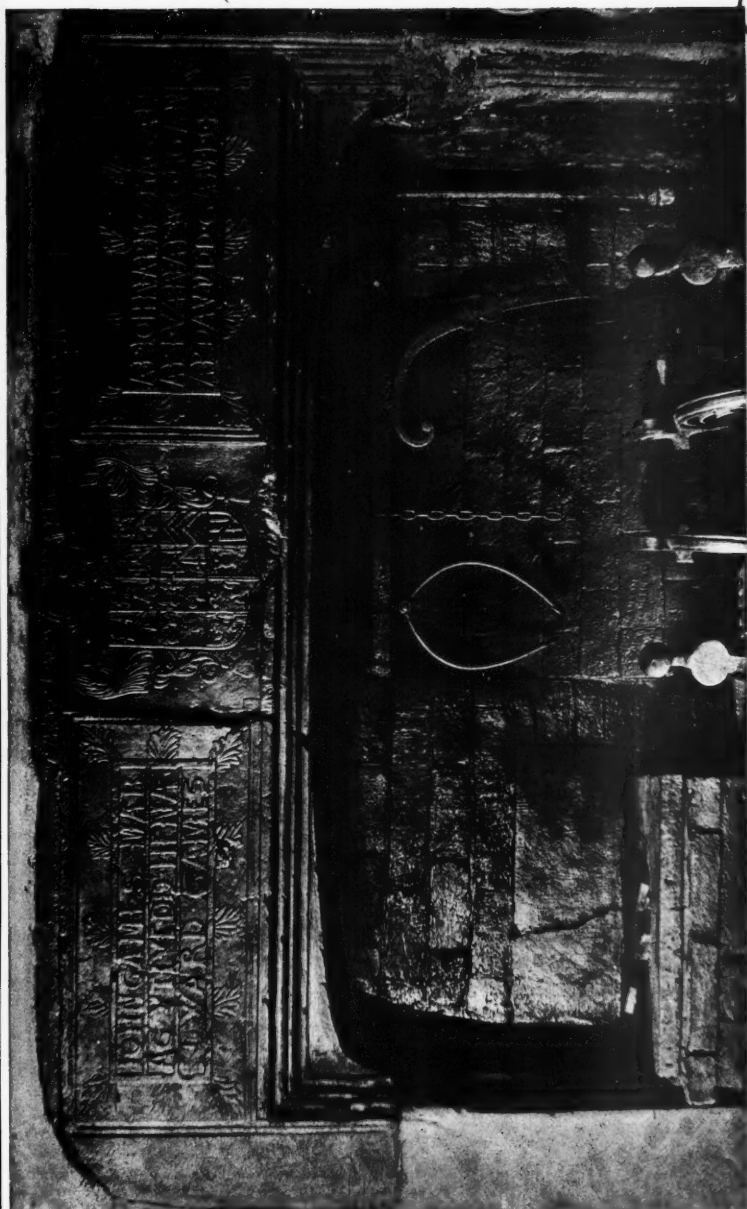




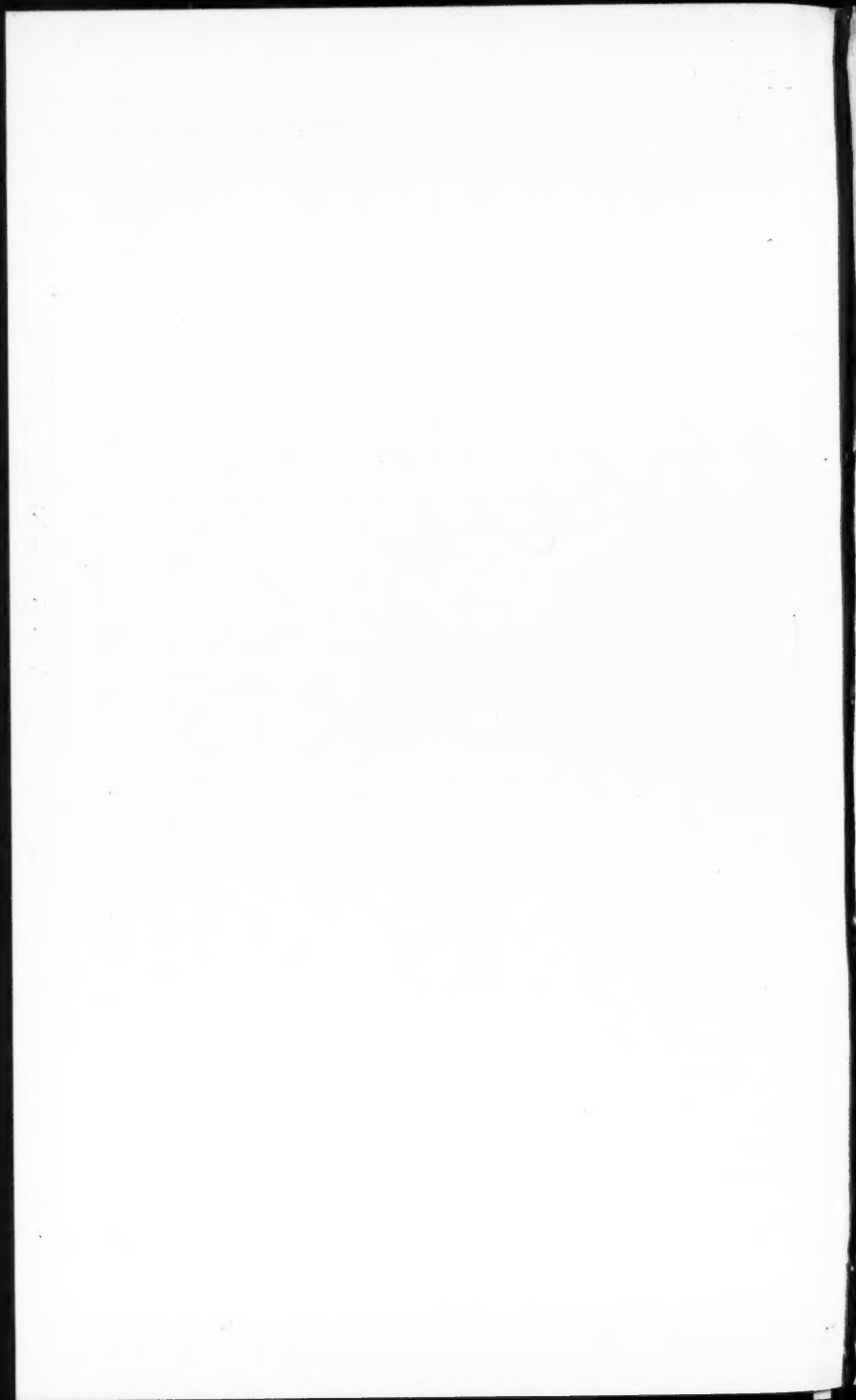
ST. JOHN'S PRIORY CHURCH, BRECON. INTERIOR LOOKING EAST.

*(From a Photograph by Dr. George Norman.)*



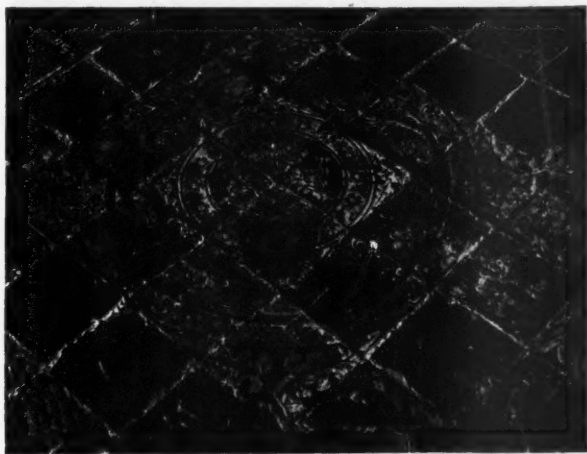


FIRE-PLACE AND INSCRIBED CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE OLD MANSION OF NEWTON, BRECON.  
*(From a Photograph by Lt. G. Edwards.)*



### Archaeological Notes and Queries.

**ENCAUSTIC TILES IN ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL.**—It would appear that the presbytery, the choir, and the *daïs* before the rood-screen in St. David's Cathedral were originally laid with encaustic tiles. "There has been a good deal of disturbance, both in front of the altar and near St. David's shrine," writes the learned authors of the *History and Antiquities of St. David's*;<sup>1</sup> "but, in the former position



Encaustic Tile Pavement in St. David's Cathedral.

at least, there are signs that the prevailing arrangement was interrupted by a border of tiles laid parallel to the wall. Between the parclose and the lowest step a central passage, equal in width to the doorway of the parclose, is marked off by borders running parallel to the walls. West of the parclose the tiles are set square, and a line of flagstones is laid down the centre of the choir, an arrangement which may or may not be original." The tiles in the *daïs* were set diagonally, but they were replaced by new ones in 1848, as the ancient ones were completely worn out.

The tiles in the presbytery are excellent representations of fifteenth-century encaustic work. Some few are modern; and they are good copies of ancient ones.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 128.

Tradition assigns the construction of the present throne to Bishop John Morgan (1496-1504), and his arms remained upon it until near the time of Browne Willis.<sup>1</sup> The erection of the throne necessitated the removal of the parolose further eastward, and it would appear that the choir and presbytery were laid with tiles about this date.

They are set diagonally, and some of the larger patterns contain as many as sixteen tiles. It seems not unlikely that they came from the celebrated manufactory at Malvern, as the arms of the Berkeley family are found on many of them. The patterns are principally enclosed in plain borders of yellow and purple, and these are



Encaustic Tile Pavement in St. David's Cathedral.

also set diagonally. Some designs represent vine-leaves and grapes, and the Tudor rose is also a notable feature on many of these tiles. The arms of Edward the Confessor, the Beauchamp family, as well as frequent representations of the Berkeley arms, are to be met with. Only one tile is depicted with the sacred monogram I. H. C. upon it, and some of the mutilated inscriptions have the words *Deo gratias* upon them. In the chancel of the church at Carew, in the same county, we find the arms of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, the See of St. David's, and the Berkeley coat, with the legend *Adjuva nos Domine*; and many of the patterns in this Pembrokeshire church may be found in St. David's Cathedral. We are reminded that these tiles in Carew Church were probably placed

<sup>1</sup> Browne Willis, p. 8; *Men. Sac.*, vol. i, p. 23.



there when Sir Rhys ap Thomas held possession of the neighbouring castle.<sup>1</sup> He was born a year later than Bishop Morgan, who probably laid down the encaustic tiles in St. David's Cathedral; and he died twenty years after him. So that the date of the tiles in Carew Church is, doubtless, the same as may be assigned to those in the Cathedral Church of St. David's.

In the well-known *History of St. David's* the authors mention that "between St. David's shrine and the Earl of Richmond's tomb, there are one or two broken tiles shown as the footprints of Cromwell's horse;" and, they add, "the tradition has obtained



Encaustic Tile Pavement in St. David's Cathedral.

such credence as makes it uncourteous, and scarcely safe, to criticise it."<sup>2</sup>

ALFRED C. FRYER.

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AN EPITAPH ON A TOMBSTONE TO BE FOUND AMONGST THE RUINS OF LLANFIHANGEL TREFHELYGEN CHURCH, NEAR LLANDYFRIOG, CARDIGANSHIRE.—"Here Lieth the body of the Reverend David Davies, late Vicar of Kenarth; and of his son James. The father died July the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Rhys (or Rice) ap Thomas (1449-1525) played an important part in the revolution which placed Henry VII on the throne; and Fuller remarks that, "well might he give him a Garter by whose effectual help he had recovered a Crown" (*Worthies*, 1662).

<sup>2</sup> See *History and Antiquities of St. David's*, by Jones and Freeman, p. 129.

20th, aged forty-six years; the son August 1st, aged nineteen years, and both in the year 1763.

"The ritual stone the wife doth lay  
O'er thy respected dust,  
Only proclaim the mournful day,  
When she a husband lost.  
In life to copy thee I'll strive,  
And when I shall resign,  
May some goodnatured friend survive  
To lay my bones with thine."

The above was copied about sixty years ago by Mr. J. D. Jones, of Hawen Hall, who happened to be passing the churchyard, which was very fortunate, as the little song is now nearly obliterated, with the exception of the names. I find, through the kindness of Mr. Barker, the Diocesan Registrar, that the above-mentioned succeeded the Rev. Richard Davies in 1749, and held the living until his death in 1763, when he was succeeded by the Rev. John Davies. It is regrettable that the memorial stones are allowed to decay without an attempt being made to preserve them.

Cenarth Vicarage.

D. H. DAVIES.

#### POPULAR LECTURES AT THE ANNUAL MEETINGS.

*To the Editor of the "Archæologia Cambrensis."*

SIR,—A much wider interest is now taken in archæological knowledge than was formerly the case in days gone by, and it is pleasant to find that many artisans take an intelligent interest in the history of their country and the story of the past. I venture to hope that the *Cambrian Archæological Association* may be able to stimulate and direct this zeal for knowledge and guide it into a right direction. Some learned societies give popular lectures at their Annual Conferences. For example, the *British Association for the Advancement of Science* always deputes a member to deliver a popular lecture, illustrated with lantern slides, to the working men of the city they are visiting. These lectures are very highly appreciated, and after the *British Association* had visited Bristol, several working men told me how much they had enjoyed the lecture delivered to them. Could not our Association undertake a similar duty for Welsh Archæology at our Annual Meetings? Many of our members are pre-eminently well qualified to deliver such lectures, and I am sure they would be appreciated by the people of the town we visit.

I am, Sir, yours very faithfully,

ALFRED C. FRYER.

13, Eaton Crescent, Clifton, Bristol,  
February 20th, 1903.